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ADAM AND SETH IN ARABIC MEDIEVAL LITERATURE: THE MANDAEAN CONNECTIONS IN AL-MUBASHSHIR IBN FĀTIK'S *CHOICEST MAXIMS* (11TH C.) AND SHAMS AL-DĪN AL-SHAHRAZŪRĪ AL-ISHRĀQĪ'S *HISTORY OF THE PHILOSOPHERS* (13TH C.)[1]

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Abstract

In the middle of the thirteenth century, Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī al-Ishrāqī (d. between 1287 and 1304) wrote an Arabic history of philosophy entitled *Nuzhat al-Arwāh wa Rawḍat al-Afrāḥ*. Using some older materials (mainly Ibn Nadīm; the *Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, and al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik), he considers the 'Modern philosophers' (ninth-thirteenth c.) to be the heirs of the Ancients, and collects for his demonstration the stories of the ancient sages and scientists, from Adam to Proclus as well as the biographical and bibliographical details of some ninety modern philosophers.

Two interesting chapters on Adam and Seth have not been studied until this day, though they give some rare – if cursory – historical information on the Mandaeans, as was available to al-Shahrazūrī al-Ishrāqī in the thirteenth century.

We will discuss the peculiar historiography adopted by Shahrazūrī, and show the complexity of a source he used, namely al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's chapter on Seth, which betray genuine Mandaean elements.

The Near and Middle East were the cradle of a number of legends in which Adam and Seth figure. They are presented as forefathers, prophets, spiritual beings or hypostases emanating from higher beings or created by their will. In this world of multi-millenary literacy, the transmission of texts often defied any geographical boundaries. Common elements and exact parallels have been retrieved between the Gnostic and Manichaean literatures transmitted in Coptic in Southern Egypt on one side, and the Christian and Manichaean legends circulating between Southern Mesopotamia, Northern Iran, and Western Syria on the other side.[2] As important religious and literary activity flourished from the

[1] This paper is part of a series of studies on al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik realised within a Marie Curie EU-project at Leiden University: "Early Arabic Literature in Context: the Hellenistic Continuum."

[2] J. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony. Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions*, Cincinatti 1992; J. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm. Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions,* Leiden 1996; A. F. J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, Leiden 1977; Stroumsa A. G, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden 1984; A. Toepel, *Die*

fourth to the seventh century, these myths and legends found a natural continuity within Christian and Muslim Arabic literature. What had by then become Biblical literature was continuously influenced by more minor movements, the existence of which can still be the object of debate, as most are known only from the esquisses made by creative heresiographers.[3]

The problematic question of the influence of Jewish and Jewish Christian literatures brings a different set of questions. Some texts such as the different *Midrash*-es and the *Talmud*-s were compiled at a late date and cannot for this reason be considered as necessarily antedating the Hermetic, Gnostic and Christian texts. Primarily, the vexed question of the multifarious influence of local Persian, Mesopotamian and Phoenician religions on Judaism needs to be addressed in order to shape a clearer panorama of the history of religions in the Middle East.[4] Moreover, currents considered as heterodox, such as the Samaritan Jews or the Qumran community, still deserve further study and a systematic comparison with early Arabic texts, including the compilations of the eleventh to the thirteenth century, which have preserved parts of the eighth- and ninth-century literature. Finally, if the Jewish and Christian contributions to Islam have been (scarcely) studied, the Egyptian Gnostic and Manichaean materials, the totality of the Nag Hammadi literature, Enochic literature, and the southern Mesopotamian Mandaean literature remain wholly unexplored in their relation to nascent Islam.

While waiting for such studies to come to light, we wish to draw attention to some neglected pieces of information gathered by medieval historians, geographers, scientists, and philosophers. This case study of the chapters on Adam and Seth started from my analysis of the materials used by Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, a little-known thirteenth-century philosopher who lived through the violent events surrounding the fall of Baghdad at the hands of the Mongols in 1258 and authored a *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ wa Rawḍat al-Afrāḥ fī ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'* (*Promenade of Souls & Garden of Rejoycings in the History of Philosophers*; hereafter: *History of Philosophers*).[5] Among his sources was

Adam- und Seth-Legenden im Syrischen "Buch der Schatzhöhle" : eine quellenkritische Untersuchung, Leuven 2006; F. G. Martinez and G. P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *Interpretations of the Flood*, Leiden 1999.

[3] On the early heresiographers, see in particular A. Pourkier, *L'Hérésiologie chez Epiphane de Salamine*, Paris 1992, esp. pp. 53-114; the recent translation of Book I of Epiphanius's *Panarion* by F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book I (Sects 1-46)*, Leiden 2009, offers an up-to-date bibliography; finally M. Tardieu, "Les Livres mis sous le nom de Seth et les Sethiens de l'hérésiologie," in M. Krause, *Gnosis and Gnosticism*, Leiden 1977, pp. 204-210 gives important guidelines on how heresiographers should be read.

[4] The questions about an Enochic literature first addressed by J. T. Milik and now by J. Reeves, whose scope encompasses Muslim literature, are of the utmost importance for the proper understanding of the polemics against Jews and Christians in the Qur'ān.

[5] On al-Shahrazūrī, see E. Cottrell, "Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī et les manuscrits de *La Promenade des Âmes et le Jardin des Réjouissances : Histoire des Philosophes* (*Nuzhat al-'Arwāḥ wa-Rawḍat al-Afrāḥ fī Ta'rīkh al-Ḥukamā'*)," in *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* LVI (2004-2005),

al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's *Mukhtar al-ḥikam wa mahāsin al-kilam* (*Choicest Maxims & Best Sayings*; hereafter: *Choicest Maxims*,) an eleventh-century collection of biographies and sayings of the ancient philosophers which started with the biblical (or Gnostic?) Seth and added a few extra semi-prophetic figures (Luqmān, Hermes Trismegistus, Dhū al-Qarnayn…) to the usual collection of ancient Greek philosophers and physicians.[6]

If the references to the Mandaeans are obvious in al-Shahrazūrī, as will be seen below in the third part of this article, the absence of any reference to his *Promenade of Souls* in the numerous studies which have come out since Chwolsohn's pioneering book may sound surprising.[7] It might be that scholars of religious literature tend to consider the works authored by theologians, religious-legal authorities, and prestigious commentators as more relevant to their field while they neglect the literature produced outside of these circles. Yet it seems that the medieval literati showed a genuine eclecticism. Muslim boys received a systematic religious education in the Qurʾānic schools *(kuttāb)* and their personal experiences of lively debates (in mosques and courts) may have entitled certain bold personalities to comment on the object of their study with their own understanding of religion.[8] In the case of the medieval works concerned with the history of philosophy, we seem to be faced with a sub-genre neglected by almost every field of research: neither history nor philosophy, 'history of religions' nor 'religious studies.' As a result, major early (ninth-tenth-c.) historians such as al-Yaʿqūbī (d. ca 905), (Ps-?) Maqdīsī (d. after 966) and al-Masʿūdī (ca 893-956), all of whom share a genuine interest in philosophy, but also in the history of religions and local folklore and legends, remain neglected, as are the so-called 'doxographical' and 'gnomological' compilations and their obscure authors.[9] Rather, we should not forget that as philosophy and

pp. 225-260. Id., "Le *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ wa Rawḍat al-Afrāḥ* de Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī: composition et sources," position de thèse, in *Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sciences Religieuses*, v. 113 (2004-2005), 383-387. Id. "al-Shahrazūrī, " in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Dordrecht, 2011, vol. 2, pp. 1190-1194.

[6] See E. Cottrell, *Le Kitāb Nuzhat al-'Arwâḥ wa-Rawdat al-'Afrâḥ de Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī*: *Composition et Sources*, Unpublished PhD thesis, EPHE (5e section), Paris, Dec. 2004.

[7] With the exception of G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden 1984, pp. 116-117, n. 7, quoting from T. Gluck's unpublished Yale Dissertation (1968), "The Arabic Legend of Seth." Chwolsohn (D. A. Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, Saint Petersburg, 1856, vol. 2, p. 228, n.1) knew al-Shahrazūrī's text but apparently used only the chapter on Ṣāb (given as the equivalent of the Hermetic Ṭāṭ), and noticed that al-Shahrazūrī had simply plagiarized al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik. He does not mention the Adam and Seth chapters, which he seems to have skipped.

[8] W. al-Qāḍī, "Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars' Alternative History of the Muslim Community," in G. Endress, *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, Leiden, 2006, pp. 23-75.

[9] An overview of this literature is to be found in Jean Jolivet's introduction ("Les Philosophes de Shahrastānī") to his translation of parts of a twelfth-century heresiographical work written in Northern Iran by al-Shahrastānī, in D. Gimaret, J. Jolivet, G. Monnot, *Shahrastānī. Le Livre des Religions et des Sectes*, Louvain/Paris, 1986, 2 vols.

religion had been going through constant mingling for a few centuries before, these authors are likely to give reports where the two fields may overlap to a certain degree. This is in part due to a process undergone by Syriac 'universal histories,' where the Greek heritage had finally been adopted after an initial stage of rejection, and tentatively integrated into Biblical history, starting with the creation of the world.[10] These two methods shaped an inescapable model for early medieval historians, although they were contradictory from their very beginning.[11]

Adamic and Sethian Books

Jewish and Christian writings on the Creation and Adam are in no way completely separate from Arabic Muslim literature. Qurʾānic commentators such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍawī, Ibn al-Kathīr, and al-Suyūṭī give lengthy explanations on Adam, his creation, the submission of the angels, the floods and other catastrophes sent by God in punishment of the wrongful nations, etc.[12]

One of the most widely-read texts alluding to the transmission of recommendations and writings from Adam to his son Seth and further on to the Sethian progeny is probably the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*. Although this is not the place to go too deeply into this fascinating material, Budge had already noticed the parallels it showed with the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Book of Adam and Eve*, and the *Book of the Bee*, all of which offer important insights into lost ancient folk literature.[13] The *Cave of Treasures* is closely related to both the *Life of Adam and Eve* and to the *Testament of Adam* of which three different Arabic versions are known. The *Testament* features among other elements Adam's teachings on the hours of the day and of the night and which angel

[10] A. J. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Interpretations of the History of Culture*, Tübingen, 1989; S. Brock, "From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek. Learning," in S. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, London 1984.

[11] See Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden 1997 (2nd revised ed.) p. 78s.

[12] References in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second edition*, Volume IV, s. v. "Khalḳ," paragr. IV, p. 980s, (R. Arnaldez); F. Rosenthal (introd. and transl.), *The History of al-Tabari, I, General Introduction and From the Creation to the Deluge*, Albany 1989. Complete up-to-date bibliography in C. Gilliot, "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*. ed. J. D. McAuliffe, Washington-Leiden, 2006 (accessible at the following url: http://www.brillonline.nl/public/exegesis).

[13] E. A. Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures. A History of the Patriarchs and the Kings their successors from the Creation to the Crucifixion of Christ (Translated from the Syriac text of the Br. Mus. MS Add. 25875)*, London 1927. J. Magliano-Tromp and M. de Jonge, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha 4), Sheffield: Academic Press 1997; M.E. Stone and G.A. Anderson, *Studies on the Books of Adam and Eve* Atlanta, 1999.

rules on each of them.[14] Several Arabic texts can be shown to share sources with or to have used the *Cave of Treasures,* which is in turn organically related to the *Testament*.[15] The Arabic versions of the *Testament* sometimes circulate as a part of a book known as the *Kitāb al-Majāll*, or *Book of Rolls*, which has been dated to around 750 AD and is a somewhat abbreviated version of the *Cave* (or an earlier and shorter one, since it stops at the death of Jesus).[16] As for the *Cave of Treasures*, it is often transmitted in Arabic together with the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, for which Graf was able to list more than 50 manuscripts.[17] Nearly a century ago, at a time when far fewer texts were available to scholars, A. Götze was able to demonstrate the use of the *Cave of Treasures* by Christian and Muslim authors writing in Arabic such as al-Ya'qūbī (fl. second half of the ninth century), al-Ṭabarī (839-923) and Eutychius (877-940).[18] We

[14] This is reminiscent of a similar teaching attributed to Enoch, son of Jared, as preserved in the Book of Astronomy contained in 1 Enoch, see G.W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam. *1 Enoch: A New Translation*, 2004. It should be added that the Samaritans also knew of a *Book of Signs* given to Adam, see M. Gaster, *The Asatir. The Samaritan Book of the "Secrets of Moses,"* London 1927, p. 198. See Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, p. 30, note 15. Arabic versions of the *Testament* have been edited by C. Bezold, "Das arabisch-äthiopische Testamentum Adami," in *Orientalische Studien Th. Nöldeke*, Giessen 1906, pp. 898-909; M. Gibson, *Studia Sinaitica* VIII, London 1901, pp. 13-17 (tr.)/12-16 (ar.) and Troupeau, "Une version arabe du *'Testament d'Adam'*," in *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont. Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux* (Cahiers d'Orientalisme, vol. 20), Genève 1989, pp. 3-14. See further the remarks of S. H. Griffith, "The Gospels, the Qur'ān, and the Presentation of Jesus in al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'rīkh*," in J. Reeves, *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in scriptural intertextuality*, Leiden 2003, p. 147, n. 61.

[15] A. Su-Min Ri, "La Caverne des Trésors et le Testament d'Adam," in *Symposium Syriacum V*, 29-31/8/1988 (Orientalia Christiana. Analecta 236), Rome, 1990, pp. 111-122, esp. pp. 121-122. Id., *La Caverne des Trésors. Les deux recensions syriaques* (CSCO 487, Scriptores Syri t. 208), introd. p. xii, note 1 for references to pseudepigrapha, parabiblical texts and oracles related to the *Cave of Treasures*.

[16] I read *majāll*, rolls, according to the common use of the term in Arabic of this period, with M. Gibson, who adopted this reading throughout her edition of the text in *Studia Sinaitica VIII*, London 1901. For the use of the term, see A. Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition: A Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography*, Leiden 2001 (Handbuch der Orientalistik, vol. 58), p. 24. A. Su-Min Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors. Etude sur l'histoire du texte et de ses sources* (CSCO 581, Subsidia t.103), Louvain, 2000, pp. 102-103, in turn, reads *al-majāl* with the meaning of "generations" because of the relation between the *Cave of Treasures* (also known as the *Book of the Succession of the Generations*, or as the *Exposition of Genesis*) and the *Book of Jubilees*. Su-Min Ri may be right but we should then add the word to the lexicon of Syriac loan-words and Syriacisms, since it does not appear in common dictionaries.

[17] G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlischen arabischen Literatur*, Vatican 1944-1947, vol. I, pp. 289-292. The *Homilies* may have been in circulation in Egypt when al-Mas'ūdī visited it, see Maçoudi, *Le Livre de l'avertissement et de la révision*, tr. E. Carra de Vaux, Paris 1896, pp. 220-221 [= *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf*, ed. J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, t. 8, Leyde 1894], who mentions that a book transmitted by the apostle Peter to his disciple and future pope, Clement, was widely read by the Christians, but that many of them doubted its authenticity

[18] The Arabic version of the *Cave of Treasures* was published by Carl Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, Leipzig 1888. See A. Götze, "Die Nachwirkung des Schatzhöhle," in *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete*, 2 (1923), p. 51-94; 3 (1924), p. 53-71; 153-177. See on the Arabic versions A. Su-Min Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne des Trésors. Etude sur l'histoire du*

may add to this list the name of Ibn al-Kalbī (737-819?), who has in his *Book of Idols*, on the pre-Islamic Arabian pagan lore, a reference to the legend of Seth's progeny venerating Adam after his death in a cave on the same mountain where he had landed after the Fall.[19] Another author who was not known to Götze because his *Kitāb al-Tijān* was edited only a few years later was Wahb ibn Munabbih (ca 655-732), who also seems to have received direct influence from the *Cave of Treasures*, and may be behind the materials transmitted in an abbreviated form by al-Ṭabarī.

The idea of a *Testament* of Adam implied the possibility of attributing a book to him, or alternatively to attribute to his son Seth – the intended recipient of this *Testament* – the taking down of the recommendations. Early Arabic literature mentions the existence of pages (*ṣuḥuf*, 'leaves,' also used with the meaning of 'books' or 'scriptures') which God had 'sent down' *(nazala)* to Adam and other prophets. The Qur'ān explicitly mentions scriptures (or 'pages,' or 'books,' *ṣuḥuf* and *kutub* are both used) in association with Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsā (Moses), and 'Īsā (Jesus).[20] The book *(kitāb)* given to Moses (i.e. the Pentateuch) is specifically mentioned in sixteen occurrences.[21] In two further cases Abraham is mentioned with Moses as the recipient of 'scriptures' (or 'pages,' *ṣuḥuf*).[22] These ancient books are given as examples of earlier teachings similar to the ones given in the Qur'ān. The mention of a book given to Jesus is explicitly used as the basis for his status of prophet. Thus we read in Qur'ān 19:30 (sūrat Maryam): "I am truly the servant of God. He gave me the Book; he made me a prophet." The existence of such books obviously added to the authority of the prophets to whom they were supposed to have been given.

The role of the commentators was to provide details and explanations of the Qur'ānic language and narratives. Primarily they would look into the *ḥadīth*-s collections, where a chapter on the Beginnings of Creation (bad' al-khalq) may be dedicated to the creation of man, the role of the angels, the description of Paradise, and would continue with histories of the early prophets (such as in Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, chap. 63-64). One of the authorities most often quoted later

texte et de ses sources, p. 62-67. In his translation of the first books of al-Ṭabarī's *History*, Franz Rosenthal pointed in several places to the influence of the *Cave of Treasures*. See F. Rosenthal (intr. and tr.), *The History of al-Ṭabarī. General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood*, Albany 1989, n. 972, pp. 333-334 and pp. 336, 337, 339.

[19] Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zaki Pasha, Cairo 1913, p. 50.

[20] The *Qur'ān* is designed as a *muṣḥaf* (i.e., a bound of *ṣuḥuf*, both deriving from the root *ṢḤF) from a very early stage. Cf A. Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition. A Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001 (Handbook of Oriental Studies, vol. 58), p. 82-83, s. v. "muṣḥaf, maṣḥaf, miṣḥaf."

[21] Qur'ān 2:53; 2:87; 6:91: 6:154; 11:17; 11:110; 17:2; 23:49; 25:35; 28:43; 28:49 (Moses's book compared to Muḥammad's); 32:23; 37:117; 40:53; 41:45; 46:12.

[22] Qur'ān 53:37-38; 87:19. Further on, unspecified scriptures *(ṣuḥuf)* are promised at a later time (74:52; 81:10). In 98:2-3, these scriptures are to be recited by God's envoy out of established books *(kutub)*.

in *tafsīr*-literature on the 'books descended from heaven' is the Yemeni Wahb ibn Munabbih (ca 655-732), son of a Yemeni woman and a Persian man from Khurasan who established himself in Yemen during the Sassanid occupation of the country.[23] In an Arabic papyrus dated August-September 844 AD, we read that Wahb said in his *Beginning of Creation (Bad' al-khalq)* that he had read seventy-two books (or 'pages,' *ṣuḥuf*) by the prophets, from the one hundred and four such books ('pages') known to have been sent down by God to all the prophets.[24] Alternatively, in Wahb ibn Munabbih's *Kitāb al-Tijān* (preserved in a version transmitted by Ibn Hishām, who died in Egypt ca 830 AD), Adam receives two books: one in Paradise and one after the Fall.[25] The same source mentions that fifty pages or books were "sent" to Seth, containing among other things a "law of Adam" *(sharī'a Adam)* which abrogated the wedding between brothers and sisters (the reader has been told before that everytime Eve was pregnant she conceived twins, a boy and a girl, and Adam married every boy to his younger cousin).[26] A variant of the story where God is said to have sent Gabriel and seventy thousand angels to Adam with a reed pen *(qalam)* and silk-paper brought from Paradise, on which he was to write his testament to Seth, is reported by Ibn Wathīma (d. 902) with a chain of warrants stemming from Ka'b al-Aḥbār (first half of the seventh c.?).[27] As mentioned above 'book' may refer in early Arabic to any piece of writing, be it a series of exhortations or a specific instruction. In this context, a *Testament*, or the *Exhortations* of a sage, may be considered as "books."[28] If a testament is given by Adam to Seth

[23] On Wahb, see in addition to G. Khoury's article in the *EI2*, the recent synthesis by the late A.-L. De Prémare, "Wahb b. Munabbih, une figure singulière du premier islam," in *Annales de l'EHESS (Histoire, Sciences sociales)*, 2005/3 (60ème année), pp. 531-549.

[24] The extract on the revealed books has been published and translated by N. Abbott, "An Arabic Papyrus in the Oriental Institute. *Stories of the Prophets*," in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 5.3, 1946, pp. 169-180. A similar extract mentioning the one hundred and four books is given by Ibn Nadīm quoting from ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Sallām – a companion of the prophet often associated with Kaʿb al-Aḥbar – the list of the prophetic books "with their prices." The text, which he suspected had originated from al-Maʾmūn's library, was obviously a forgery in his eyes. He notes with disapprobation that "the masses believe in such tales." (Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (introd. and critical ed.), *Al-Nadīm. Kitāb al-Fihrist*, London 2009 I/1, bāb I, 2, p. 53).

[25] Wahb ibn Munabbih, *Kitāb al-Tijān fī mulūk Ḥimyār*, Ṣan'ā', 1979, p. 15, p. 17 (the early edition by F. Krenkow, Hyderabad 1927, is hardly available in libraries). R. G. Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih. Teil 1: Der Heidelberger Papyrus PSR Heid Arab 23. Leben und Werk des Dichters*, Wiesbaden 1972, pp. 216-218. Al-Mas'ūdī (m. 956?) gives the number of thirty-one books (twenty-one in Ibn al-Nadim's source, see preceding note) received by Adam and twenty-nine by Seth (al-Mas'ūdī, *Prairies*, 1877, vol. 1, p. 73). See the comments of Abbott, *loc. cit*., p. 174.

[26] Wahb ibn-Munabbih, *Kitāb al-Tijān fī mulūk Ḥimyār*, p. 27. This last detail may aim at polemicizing against the Zoroastrian practice, see *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, G. J. van Gelder, art. "Incest and Inbreeding." http://www.iranica.com/articles/incest-and-inbreeding.

[27] R. G. Khoury, *Les Légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam. Depuis le 1er jusqu'au IIIe s. de l'Hégire. D'après le manuscrit d'Abū Rifā'a 'Umāra b. Waṯīma b. Mūsā b. al-Furāt al-Fārisī al-Fasawī*: *Kitāb Bad' al-ḫalq wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Wiesbaden, 1978, p. 345.

[28] On the transition from oral teaching to book scholarship, see Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam. From the aural to the read*, Revised edition, Edinburgh, 2009.

as a recipient, and is ultimately destined to be passed on to the following generations, the authority of such a text may become ambiguous.

With this background in mind, we can now turn to the extracts about Adam and Seth preserved in two "histories of wisdom" composed during the mid-eleventh century and around the mid-to-late thirteenth-century respectively. It has been long known that Shahrazūrī (d. between 1287 and 1304) used al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik (d. 1087?) extensively to compose the chapters on the Pre-Islamic philosophers in his *Promenade of Souls*, but in the case which is the object of our focus, we are faced with materials belonging to Shahrazūrī and partly not taken from al-Mubashshir. To keep the chronology in good order and show the way Shahrazūrī added to his source, we will start with al-Mubashshir's ibn Fātik's chapter on Seth, and move on to Shahrazūrī's chapters on Adam and Seth.

II. AL-MUBASHSHIR IBN FĀTIK AND THE SETH CHAPTER

Al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik, a Syrian erudite and bibliophile who lived at the Fatimid court in eleventh-century Cairo, composed a work which was to become famous in medieval Europe, where it enjoyed half a dozen translations between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century.[29] As the first Arabic manuscript of al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik's *Choicest Maxims*[30] *and Best Sayings (Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa maḥāsin al-kalim,* or *al-kilam)* was reaching the Leiden University Library at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the book fell into oblivion, although the sayings it contained may have once inspired all from Chaucer to Christine de Pisan and Petrarch.[31]

The misleading title of the work does not do justice to the important biographies assembled by Ibn Fātik, sometimes from Greek primary sources which are for their essential part lost to us (e.g. his chapters on Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Galen). As for the large collections of sayings which serve to illustrate the lives and thought of the aforementioned figures, they remind us of a genre widely diffused from Diogenes Laertius to Stobaeus, and already for centuries before them, of a favourite genre of ancient Semitic literature.[32] The

[29] F. Rosenthal, "Al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik: Prolegomena to an Abortive Edition", *Oriens* 13-14 (1960-1961), pp. 132-158; F. Rodríguez Adrados, *Greek Wisdom Literature and the Middle Ages: The Lost Greek Models and their Arabic and Castilian Translations*, Bern 2005 [I discovered this publication after the completion of this article].

[30] The Arabic word which is used here for 'maxims *(ḥikam)*' stems from the same root as 'wisdom' *(ḥikma)*. This parallelism cannot be rendered in this English translation of the title but is preserved in French where collections of proverbs or maxims may be called 'sagesses.'

[31] See F. Rosenthal, loc. cit. and the up-to-date bibliography, in E. Cottrell, "Al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik", in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Dordrecht 2011, vol. 1, pp. 815-818.

[32] See Dimitri Gutas, "Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature: Nature and Scope," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), pp. 49-86.

direct sources of Ibn Fātik have been partly retrieved in the mass of translations made available during the eighth-eleventh century AD in the circles of al-Kindī (d. ca 866) and of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 873), although the Baghdad movement was not unique in providing translations.[33] The Umayyad court in Syria and the network of monasteries spread all over the Near and Middle-East, including the famed Gundishapur, which lay not so far from both Baṣra and al-Ḥira, where early Arabic literature had developed, also come to mind as possible providers of translations. Moreover, Ibn Fātik's association with two of the greatest scientists present at the Fatimid court, Ibn al-Haytham and Ibn Riḍwān, should have granted him access to most of the philosophical, mathematical, and astronomical sources his teachers had been reading and commenting upon.

The book is composed of twenty biographies: Seth, Hermes, Asclepius, Ṣāb, Homer, Hippocrates, Solon, Zenon, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Diogenes, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy, Galen, St Basil, St Gregory, Mahadarjis, and Luqmān. The structure of Ibn Fātik's chapters resembles that of the biographies in Diogenes Laertius's *Lives and Doctrines of the Philosophers*, but compared to the latter it shows a special interest in gnomological sayings. Al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik's choice of wisdom figures seems to have been greatly influenced by the Egyptian past. As an erudite who looked for every rare and ancient book (an activity to which he had devoted his life and which led to the destruction of his library at the hands of his wife immediately after his death), Ibn Fātik sometimes challenges modern readers with his knowledge of the ancient Mediterranean.[34] Next to the Hermetic revealers, Pre-Socratics and 'divine' philosophers keep company with the Cappadocian fathers; the well-travelled Alexander the Great, remembered both as a disciple of Aristotle and as the founder of Alexandria, serves as an example of an enlightened ruler, preaching monotheism and justice to the newly conquered people.[35]

However, Hermes and Alexander were more than Greek figures of wisdom. For some early Muslim writers and commentators they were actually syncretistic characters, shared by a wide range of people in the Near East. Hermes was

[33] See D. Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation. A Study of the Graeco-Arabic Gnomologia*, New Haven 1975; Id., *Greek Philosophers in the Arabic Tradition*, Aldershot, 2000. Franz Rosenthal has given parallels to Ibn Fātik in almost every publication but especially in *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam*, Zurich, 1965 (English transl. *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, London-Berkeley, 1975) and in *Greek Philosophy in the Arab World: A Collection of Essays*, Aldershot, 1990. On the Iranian realm, see M. Zakeri (below, note 63).

[34] There is no need to say that I completely disagree with O. Leaman in his judgement on the *Choicest Maxims* in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J. Scott Meisami and P. Starkey, London 1998, vol. 2, p. 536; the numerous studies of Franz Rosenthal and Dimitri Gutas have amply demonstrated Ibn Fātik's use of firsthand materials.

[35] This image of Alexander is already that of Qur'ān 18:83-102 where the Macedonian sovereign is given the name of *Dhū al-Qarnayn*, i.e. the Two-Horned. The assimilation is endorsed explicitly by Ibn Fātik (but not by every commentator or historian).

considered the Greek equivalent of the Biblical Enoch (associated with the large parabiblical corpus of Enochic literature) whose Arabic name was Idris.[36] As for Alexander, the Qur'ān betrays some reminiscence of the 'Alexander novel' (although from which version, if not directly parallel to elements known also to the famous historians Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and Arrian, remains an object of debate).[37] The title *Dhū al-Qarnayn*, or 'He with the two horns' may refer to the representation of the Macedonian sovereign common on Ptolemaic and Seleucid coins. They represent the horns of the god Ammon, figured as a ram in his temple of Siwa (Lybian desert, in Western Egypt), where Alexander stopped to consult the oracle who prophesied to him his tragic fate.[38] Another semi-prophetic personality in this list is the disputed Luqmān, whose name is also the title of a Qur'ānic *sūrat* where verses 31:12-19 give a series of his wise teachings to his son. Some important literature on Luqmān existed in Syriac, Arabic and Coptic, and the Syriac text has been shown to display parallels with the Aramaic 'Ahiqar novel,' but also betrays some contradictions.[39] Finally a somewhat obscure figure, Mahadarjis, may represent the Persian (and Indian?) element in the Egyptian society, if we are to follow Mohsen Zakeri's hypothesis of identifying him with a sixth-century Zoroastrian priest.[40]

[36] Qur'ān 19:56-57 alludes to an ascension of Idris (commonly identified with Enoch and Hermes). In Book 3 of *1 Enoch*, where Enoch son of Jared describes his heavenly ascension with the angel Uriel and the revelation made to him of astronomy and other secrets of creation, while in *Enoch 2*, the prophet ascends in company of two angels through seven heavens. J. Reeves has announced a forthcoming book on Enochic literature in Jewish, Christian and Muslim sources: J. Reeves, 'Complicating the Notion of an 'Enochic Judaism',' in Gabriele Boccaccini, (ed.), *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*, 2005, pp. 373-383.

[37] Recent study and up-to-date bibliography in K. van Bladel, "The Legend of Alexander the Great in the Qur'an 18:83-102," in G. S. Reynolds, *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, London 2008, pp. 175-204, who study the literary parallels between a Syriac text and the Qur'ān extract. I disagree with his hypothesis of a direct influence, as too many texts are lost to us.

[38] The most researched attempt to challenge the identification of Dhū al-Qarnayn with Alexander is that of R. Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes Orientalis and the Problem of Dhū al-Qarnain," in *Graeco-Arabica,* 4, 1991, pp. 223-264, who attempts to identify him with Cyrus the Great, the conqueror of the 'two horns' of the world, that is the East and the West, unconvincingly in my view.

[39] See the discussion by the early and modern commentators on Luqmān in Riad Aziz Kassis, *The Book of Proverbs and Arabic Proverbial Works*, Leiden 1999, pp. 47-49.

[40] M. Zakeri, "'Alī ibn 'Ubaida ar-Raiḥānī: A Forgotten Belletrist *(adīb)* and Pahlavi Translator," in *Oriens* 34 (1994), pp. 76-102, at pp. 96-101. For the Persian presence at the Fatimid court, see a recent study by T. Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shirazi and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry; a Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature*, Leiden, 2005. The celebrated traveler Nasir-i Khusraw visited the Fatimid court in 1048, see A. C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher*, London-New York, 2000. On the philosophical sources used by the Ismā'īlī propagandists, see the master work of D. De Smet, *La Quietude de l'Intellect*: *Néoplatonisme et Gnose Ismaelienne dans l'Oeuvre de Hamid Ad-Din Al-Kirmani*, Leuven 1995.

The Fatimid Context

It should be emphasized, since this has not been noticed before, that al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik's *Choicest Maxims* should be re-evaluated as a major product of Cairene Fatimid Ismā'īlī literature. Even if such intellectuals and erudites as al-Mubashshir and his teacher the physician and astronomer Ibn Riḍwān may not have been directly involved in spreading the Fatimid creed, we must consider their scientific endeavours within the Ismā'īlī context. The very interest in the 'ancient' or 'foreign' sciences lies at the heart of the Ismā'īlī creed[41] and its proselytism (also known as the *da'wa*, often translated as *'propaganda'*).[42] Greek philosophy in particular was already the object of intensive study by the early propagandists (*dā'ī*, pl. *du'āt*) in ninth-century Khorasan. [43] Shī'ī imams are considered as the shadow of God on earth and the Fatimid caliphate was established with the imam as the actual ruler. The devout (or in this case, proselyte) was initiated into a path of salvific knowledge destined to lead him from the mere exoteric understanding of religion to the inner, 'esoteric' secrets that had been revealed by the succession of the rightful imams.[44]

In his summary of the Fatimid doctrine, the Sunni historian al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442)[45], author of one of the few historical works to have survived about the Fatimid period, gives us the following information about the role played by Greek philosophy in the progression of the new convert:

> Après une longue période de temps, le prosélyte étant arrivé à croire que les principes de la législation ont été établis à la façon d'énigmes pour le gouvernement du commun et qu'ils ont un sens tout autre que celui qu'indique l'apparence, le dā'ī [ismaélien] le fait passer aux spéculations de la philosophie. Il l'incite à étudier les spéculations de Platon, Aristote, Pythagore et de ceux qui (ont écrit) dans leur sens. Il lui interdit d'accepter les récits et théories fondées sur la révélation et lui vante l'obéissance aux preuves rationnelles… (al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, vol. 2, chap. *al-shī'a*, p. 77, ed. Cairo-Bulaq, 1854)[46]

[41] Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, London 1998, pp. 168-169.

[42] Jean Jolivet, "L'idée de la Sagesse et sa fonction dans la philosophie des 4e et 5e siècles [i.e.: 'de l'Hégire' (sic)]", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 1 (1991), p. 31-65, esp. p. 42 (for the equivalence of wisdom and prophecy in the Ismā'īlī context) and p. 51 (for al-Mubashshir's scope).

[43] D. De Smet, "Les Bibliothèques ismaéliennes et la question du néoplatonisme ismaélien," in C. D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, Leiden 2007 (Philosophia Antiqua 107), pp. 481-492.

[44] The best analysis of the dichotomy exoteric/esoteric in Shī'ism and the related role of the imams as hermeneuts remains Henry Corbin, *En Islam Iranien*, Paris 1971, 4 vols. Cf. M.-A. Amir-Moezzi, 'Shi'ite doctrine,' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, accessible online at http://www.iranica.com/articles/shiite-doctrine.

[45] His plagiarism from a contemporary has been shown by F. Bauden. See recently F. Bauden, "Maqriziana IX: Should al-Maqrizi Be Thrown Out with the Bath Water? The Question of His Plagiarism of al-Awḥadī's *Khiṭāṭ* and the Documentary Evidence," in *Mamluk Studies Review*, XIV, 2010, pp. 159-232, accessible online at http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html.

[46] P. Casanova, "La Doctrine secrète des Fatimides d'Egypte, " in *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale,* 18 (1921), pp. 121-165, on pp. 142-143.

Turning now to the Biblical figures in al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik's *Choicest Maxims*, we may wonder why Ibn Fātik started his book with a chapter on "Seth son of Adam," but did not include a chapter on Adam himself. Only in the work of Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, to which we will come below, will we see a chapter on Adam as the inventor of techniques and something of an alchemist. The reason why al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik did not include a chapter on Adam may rely on some specificities of the Ismā'īlī doctrine of prophethood, which gives to Adam a special status, that of a "speaking-prophet *(nāṭiq)*" in Ismā'īlī terminology. The seven "speakers" are considered as originators of the historical cycles.[47] They are necessarily accompanied by a spiritual legatee, called the "silent *(ṣāmit)*" prophet, whose role is to reveal the actual meaning of the religious law *(sharī'a)*.[48] Ibn Fātik seems to attribute a special status to Seth. By doing so, he endorses claims of the existence of a pre-Abrahamic, Adamic religion, which were favoured by some extremist Shī'īte movements who proponed antinomism. The most famous of these movements was that of the Assassins, who proclaimed the return of the Mahdī and abolished religious law (the *sharī'a*) in 1164.[49] Some 50 years before Ibn Fātik, the Druzes had a particular interpretation of Adam, which they allegorized into a threefold figure: the 'pure and universal' Adam; the 'rebel and partial Adam' and finally the 'forgetful and corporeal Adam.' Moreover, the Druzes say that both Adam and Eve are normal human beings (and not protoplasts), born from a father and a mother.[50] The figure of Seth in the Druze writings is that of Adam's spiritual legatee; as such, he is almost a hypostasis of the threefold Adam.[51]

Although Seth is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, the Shī'ī in particular seem to have given him a special importance.[52] They regard Seth as the rightful

[47] Cf. F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs. Their history and Doctrine*, Cambridge 1990, p. 139; Henry Corbin, "Epiphanie divine et naissance spirituelle dans la gnose ismaélienne," in *Eranos Jahrbuch* 23 (1954), pp. 141-249; repr. in H. Corbin, *Temps cyclique et gnose ismaélienne*, Paris 1982 (English translation: *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, London, 1983). The special status of Adam had been emphasized in the Druze doctrine (see D. De Smet, *Les Epîtres sacrées des Druzes*, Leuven-Paris-Dudley, 2007, pp. 244-254 and p. 244, n. 497), a schism which had agitated the Fatimid court during the first quarter of the eleventh century. By avoiding Adam, al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik may have adopted an attitude of prudence towards a heated doctrinal debate.

[48] See P. W. Walker, *Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī. Intellectual Missionary*, London: Tauris, 1998, p. 66 and D. De Smet, *Les Epîtres Sacrées des Druzes*, Leuven, 2007, pp. 61-62 and esp. n. 265. F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs. Their History and Doctrine*, p. 139.

[49] Ch. Jambet, *La grande Résurrection d'Alamut*, Paris 1990.

[50] On the Druze Adam and its Ismā'īli counterpart, see D. De Smet, *Les Epîtres sacrées des Druzes*, p. 244, n. 497. On the Druze antinomian claims, *loc. cit*., p. 251. Stories of Adam's parents and tribe also figure in a work by the tenth-century Ismā'ilī dā'ī Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Sarā'ir wa asrār al-nuṭaqā'*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Beirut, 1984, p. 27; p. 32.

[51] D. De Smet, *loc. cit*., p. 242; p. 251.

[52] (Ps-?) Mas'ūdī, *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, Beyrouth, n. d., p.19-22. E. Kohlberg, "Some Shī'ī Views of the Antediluvian World," in *Studia Islamica*, 52 (1980), pp. 41-66, notes on pp. 63-64 that some specific prescriptions regarding burial were revealed at the time of Adam's death and performed by Seth.

successor of Adam, the keeper and transmitter of his oath and his commandments. His name would have meant 'gift of God *(hibat Allāh)*'. Traces of influence may have been through the *Cave of Treasures* where Seth is the recipient of Adam's recommendations and secrets, but also through the story of the Watchers, which was transmitted in both the Christian and the Manichaean communities. Just as in the *Book of Watchers*, the allegory of the fight between good and evil took the shape of debates about the sons of Seth and the sons of Cain. In the thirteenth century, Bar Hebraeus (*Chronography*, p. 4, tr. Budge) still witnesses the continuity of this legacy, writing that the sons of Seth had to put a king at their head (although they did not need one before that, living as they were in an 'Adamic state' of peace and purity) in answer to the aggression of the wrongful sons of Cain, who had invented kingship as a necessity to rule their bad behaviour. The first king of the Sethians was according to Bar Hebraeus no other than the first Chaldean king Aloros, following the famous list established by Berossus in his *Babyloniaca*. He was followed by nine successors.[53] According to Bar Hebraeus, the Flood would have taken place under the tenth Chaldean king, Ksisouthros.[54]

Next to the challenge of Druze's claims and a harmonizing vision of biblical narratives,[55] it may have been the circulation of writings attributed to Seth that incited Ibn Fātik to have a chapter on him, as also the fact that the first 'religious law' – that of Adam forbidding the wedding of brothers and sisters – was occasionally attributed to Seth. It is not possible at this stage to ascertain which community was in the mind of al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik when he decided to include Seth among the most important figures of wisdom as one who was considered a specifically venerated prophet: the Samaritans had been calling themselves 'Sons of Seth';[56] the Manicheans and the Mandaeans had a figure named Sethel who obviously played the same role as Seth in the Biblical narratives[57] and was still known to the ninth-century Ibn al-Nadīm as the name given by Adam to his son according to Mani.[58]

[53] Bar Hebraeus notes that the Greeks who transmitted this list have altered the names, which have to be read with the Syrian pronunciation since they were the ancestors of the Syrians. His source may have been Syncellus, an eighth-century Christian chronographer who lived in Palestine and in Byzantium. See W. Adler and P. Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos. A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*, Oxford 2002, p. 24.

[54] See E. Noort, "The Stories of the Great Flood: Notes on Gen 6:5-9:17 in Its Context of the Ancient Near East," in F. G. Martinez and G. P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *Interpretations of the Flood*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999, pp. 1-38, esp. p. 2.

[55] We should remember here that the Fatimids were ruling as a minority Shī'ī sect and needed for this reason the support of other minorities, such as the Jews and the Christians, as shows the lists of their viziers provided by Leila al-Imad, *The Fatimid Vizierate 969-1172*, Berlin 1990.

[56] Klijn, *Seth*, p. 32.

[57] G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, pp. 145-146.

[58] G. Stroumsa, *Loc. cit*., p. 74, quoting from Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*.

Looking through the early Arabic heresiographical literature, we find that a group of 'Sabeans' was claiming Seth as its prophet. According to the heresiographer 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), there were two main groups named the Sabeans: a group from Ḥarrān and a group from Wāsiṭ in central Iraq. The first adhered to the eternity of the world while the second did not. Of this second group, one part originally came from Greece and gave tributes to God while the second did not. This group prayed towards the north, ate pork, and claimed to be the followers of the religion of Seth, whose holy book they kept.[59] Al-Baghdādī is not the only scholar to show a precise knowledge of the Mandaeans, as was efficiently demonstrated by Gündüz, who also gathered an important number of allusions from authorities from the eighth and ninth century. A seldom-quoted author is Theodore bar Koni, a Christian heresiographer writing in Syriac in the city of Kashkar, who in the last decade of the eighth century gave a report on the Mandaeans in his *Book of Scholia*, chap. 11, where he was able to quote "in a Mandaizing Syriac" some extracts reminiscent of the Ginza.[60]

Al-Mubashshir may have had the idea for a chapter on Seth either from his readings from the Eastern Muslim heresiographers discussing the communities which claimed Seth for their prophet or from other authorities mentioning him within commentaries on Biblical matters which found parallels in the Qur'ān. The number of authorities dealing with the "Sabeans," the mystery of their identity although they were mentioned in the Qur'ān, and finally the importance of the non-Qur'ānic figure of Seth may have been among the reasons he wished to have a chapter on Seth and his "religious law." We will present a translation of the chapter here, and will continue with al-Shahrazūrī, who two centuries later would take over Ibn Fātik's chapter and add some information of his own.

The Seth Chapter

The chapter on Seth in al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's *Choicest Maxims*[61] is composed of:

[59] See S. Gündüz, *The Knowledge of Life: The Origins and Early History of the Mandaeans and their Relations to the Sabians of the Qur'an and to the Harranians*, Oxford 1994, p. 41, quoting al-Baghdādī's *Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn*, Istanbul 1928, pp. 324-325. A similar extract, giving fewer details and stating that the book of Seth was later transmitted by Noah, is that of the qaḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār in his *Mughnī*, cf. G. Strousma, *Another Seed*, p. 116.

[60] D. Kruisheer, "Theodore Bar Koni's *Ketābā d-'Eskloyon* as a Source for the Study of Early Mandaeism," in *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*, 33, 1993-1994, pp. 151-169.

[61] al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik, *Mukhtār al-hikam wa maḥāsin al-kilam*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī, Madrid 1958.

– a short introduction (p. 4.5-5.5, ed. Badawī);
– 16 precepts established by Seth for the "pious[62] believer" *(al-mu'mīn al-ḥanīfī)* (pp. 4.5-5.5, ed. Badawī);
– a gnomology (25 sayings).

In what follows I will discuss the first two parts of this short chapter on Seth. It would be out of the scope of this article to discuss the third part, since I consider that this gnomology stems from two sources pasted together and artificially added to the Seth chapter. The characteristic beginning of the first nine sayings (pp. 5.6-6.6) with "The king should…" (literally: "the king's path should be that…," *sabīl al-malik an..*) points to a 'Mirror for princes' as one of these sources, and the next series of fourteen (pp. 6.7-7.6), which lacks this pattern, is constituted of common proverbs and ethical advice.[63] These sayings seem to have been added at the end of the chapter. The same method was applied to several other chapters where a series of sayings taken from mirror-collections can be followed from one chapter to the other, usually pasted at the end of the gnomological part of the chapters (e.g. Asclepius; Ṣāb; Pythagoras…).

Al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik, *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa maḥāsin al-kilam* (pp. 4-6 ed. Badawī)

(1) فصول كلام شيث النبي (عليه السلام) و آدابه.
(2) اسمه عند اليونانيين أوراني الأوّل. (3) و هو أوّل من أخذوا عنه الشريعة و الحكمة.
(4) قال: إنّه يجب أن يكون في المؤمن الحنيفي ستّ عشرةَ فضيلة.
الأولى المعرفة بالله تعالى و ملائكته من السمائيين و الروحانيين و حملةِ العرش و أهل طاعته.[64]

[62] 'Pious,' is a translation chosen from the context. The word ḥanīf has different acceptions, as it is used in Syriac to designate the 'Pagans,' in opposition to the Christians. However, in the Qur'ān, it has a positive acception (Abraham is designated as a ḥanīf). See the recent illuminating discussion given by M. P. Penn, "Monks, Manuscripts, and Muslims: Syriac Textual Changes in Reaction to the Rise of Islam," in *Hugoye*, vol. 12, 2 (Summer 2009), pp. 244-248, accessible online at http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol12No2/index.html, on the use of this word for both Pagans and Muslims, during the seventh and the eighth century. I will comment below on the term in the present context.

[63] Related materials have been discussed extensively in two recent publications by Mohsen Zakeri, *Persian Wisdom in Arabic Garb: Ali b. 'Ubayda Al-Rayḥānī (d. 219/834) and His Jawāhir Al-Kilam Wa-Farā'id Al-Ḥikam*, Leiden 2006, and Kevin van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science*, Oxford 2009, but this cannot be the place to discuss them. I intend to develop my argumentation on the Seth chapter in a book review of Van Bladel's recent publication, to appear in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*. For now, see Vishanoff, "An Imagined book gets a new text: Psalms of the Muslim David," in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 22:1 (2011), pp. 85-99.

[64] Temporarily, I will correct the sentence with the text as it appears in al-Shahrazūrī's *Kitāb Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, because the text in Badawī's edition of al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik is somewhat awkward. It reads: المعرفة بالله عزّ وجلّ و بأهل طاعته و يقدّيسيه و السمائيين و الملائكته الروحانيين و حملة العرش. : "To acknowledge God (to Him is the might and majesty!) and those who obey Him,

و الثانية معرفة الخير ومعرفة الشرّ، أمّا الخير فاليرغب فيه، و أمّا الشرّ فاليُحذرْ من فعله.
والثالثة السمع و الطاعة للملك الرحيم الذي استخلفه الله تعالى في الأرض و ملّكه أمر العباد.
و الرابعة برّ الوالدين.
و الخامسة اصطناع المعروف بقدر الطاقة.
و السادسة مُواساةُ للفقراء.
و السابعة التعصُّب للغريب.
و الثامنة الشجاعةُ في طاعةِ ربّ العالمين.
و التاسعة العصمة عن الفجور.
و العاشرة الصبر بالإيمان و اليقين.
و الحادية عشرة صدق اللهجة.
و الثانية عشرة العدل.
و الثالثة عشرة القنوع في الدنيا.
و الرابعة عشرة الضحايا و القرابينُ شكراً لله تعالى على ما أوْلى خلقه من النعم.
و الخامسة عشرة الحلم و حمدُ الله جلّ اسمه على مصائب الدنيا من غير تململ.
و السادسة عشرة الحياءُ و قلّةُ المماراة.

(1) "Chapters (*fuṣūl*, lit. 'paragraphs, series')[65] of the discourse of the prophet Seth (on whom be peace) and his ethical sayings *(ādābuhu)*. (2) His name among the Greeks is Ūrānī the First. (3) He was the first from whom religious law and wisdom were learned *(awwal man akhadhū 'anhu…)*."[66] (4) He said: 'A pure believer *(al-mu'mīn al-ḥanīfī)* should achieve these sixteen qualities:

1. To acknowledge God *(Allāh)* (Exalted is He!) and His angels, the celestial ones, the spiritual ones, the bearers of the throne and the obedients.
2. The knowledge of good and evil. Good is that which is aspired to while evil is that which one avoids committing.
3. To hear and obey the merciful king, who has been established by God as His successor on earth and who God *(Allāh)* appointed ruler of the affairs of his servants.

and His holy ones, or His Saints, [cf. 1 Enoch 1 I,9] and the celestial [beings] as also the spiritual angels and the bearers of the throne"). It remains possible that al-Shahrazūrī has himself corrected the sentence for sake of clarity, but I cannot investigate this point within this short article.

[65] On *faṣl*, pl. *fuṣūl*: chapter, see Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition: A Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography*, p. 110.

[66] The verb is here in the plural, and may point at the Greeks as the group who took from Seth "law and wisdom."

4. To respect one's parents.
5. To follow the [accepted] customs as much as possible.
6. To be charitable towards the poor.
7. To be zealous in protecting foreigners.
8. To be courageous in obeying the Lord of the Universe *(rabb al-ʿālamīn)*.
9. To preserve one's self from any kind of immorality *(fujūr)*.
10. Patience in one's faith and certainty [in the Hereafter].
11. Truthfulness in speech.
12. Justice.
13. Contentment with one's share in this world.
14. [To offer] the best immolations and sacrifices in expression of one's gratefulness towards God for the favours He has given His creatures.
15. To be constant and worshipful to God in every adversity in this world, without tergiversation *(tamallul)*.
16. Modesty and humility *(qillat al-mumārāt)*.'"

Commentary

(1) (3) and (4) insist on the status of Seth as a prophet: he is given the title of *nabī* and the traditional laudatory formula is applied in (1); a religious law and a higher wisdom are attributed to him; finally, his morals are especially addressed to "the pure believer".[67] His prophetic status is ascertained by his practice of a religious law (epitomized in the precepts), following the view commonly held by early commentators and historians.[68] We are reminded here of the legends transmitted in the *Books of Adam and Eve*, where Seth is allowed to know the secrets which were revealed to Adam about the coming events of history after he had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. The coming Law was also revealed to Seth; the transgressions to be committed by the people, and

[67] Here we should identify this expression as a reference to the Harranians, who claimed "Paganism (in Syriac, *ḥanpūtā*)" for religion (cf. G. Fowden, *From Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of monotheism in late antiquity*, Princeton 1993, p. 64, and Chwolsohn, *Ssabier*, I, 178), and were known by Ibn al-Nadīm to have had a book called the *Kitāb al-Ḥunafā'* (so for the 'Abrahamic Sabeans', see *al-Fihrist*, I/1, p. 51.10, ed. A. F. Sayyid) which should probably be identified with the *Kitāb al-ḥātifī* (sic) that Harranian initiates were wearing around their necks during the mysteries in which Jupiter was invoked, as was first suggested by Dozy and De Goeje, "Nouveau documents pour l'étude de la religion des Harraniens," in *Actes du Sixième Congrès International des Orientalistes tenu en 1883 à Leide, Deuxième partie, Section 1: Sémitique*, Leiden 1885, pp. 281-366, at pp. 295-296. Both readings may be read directly as a transliteration from Syriac *al-ḥanpā*, but the recent edition by A. F. Sayyid, *The Fihrist*, 2/1, p. 365.13, gives the incorrect reading *al-ḥātifī*.

[68] According to Ṭabarī, Seth stayed in Mecca, performed the pilgrimage, and kept acting in accordance with the (commandements of) the scrolls received by him and by his father. See F. Rosenthal (introd. and transl.), *The History of al-Tabari, I, General Introduction and From the Creation to the Deluge*, Albany 1989, p. 335 (= al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 164 ed. De Goeje); Wahb ibn Munabbih, *Kitāb al-Tijān*, p. 27.

the coming of Jesus.[69] Early heresiographers such as Epiphanius attribute the authorship of seven books (*Panarion* 39.5.1) to Seth and claim that a sectarian group was considering him as the actual Christ (Pseudo-Tertullian, *Refutation of all Heresies*, chap. XLVII). The attribution of wisdom to Seth may be related to his knowledge of future events, but we may also note an extract in the first-century Flavius Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* where the descendants of Seth are said to have preserved their discoveries about the heavenly spheres and their order on two steles of brick and stone, so that sciences would survive the two coming Floods, one of fire and one of water, about which Adam had been informed.[70]

(2) Much has been written on the possible readings behind the word *Ūrānī (in Shahrazūrī and others: *Ūriyā).[71] The same title appears again in the chapter on Hermes, where Agathodaimon is given as the "Second *Ūrānī" and his disciple Hermes as the "Third *Ūrānī." As the title usually applied to Hermes is that of Trismegistos (which appear in al-Mubashshir as *Ṭarasmīn*, an obvious corruption of *Ṭarasmigistus*), one is tempted to suspect here a new interpretation of the three Hermeses, especially since the Arabic sources do mention three different figures under the name Hermes.[72]

Concerning Seth, a reading comes to mind when faced with the different possibilities of finding a potential source for *Ūrānī/*Ūriya (the latter is the reading of the majority of al-Shahrazūrī's manuscripts). We read in the early

[69] Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, p. 17, quoting *Vita Adae et Evae*, XXIX, 1-4.

[70] Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 4.33 (Loeb edition, transl. Thackeray, Cambridge 1967). It is remarkable that the progeny of Seth (precisely the 'seven generations after him') are attributed a knowledge usually granted to the early Pythagoreans. The motif of the burial of tablets engraved with the sciences in order to pass them on to future generations has been discussed recently in the contexts relevant to us by Einar Thomassen, "Revelation as Book and Book as Revelation: Reflections on the Gospel of Truth," in *The Nag Hammadi Texts in the History of Religions. Proceedings of the International Conference (Copenhagen, Sept. 19-24, 1995)*, Copenhagen 2002, pp. 35-45; A. A. Orlov, "Two Tablets' Traditions from the *Book of Giants* to *Palaea Historica*," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 32, 2001, pp. 137-158. Orlov develops interesting arguments pointing to the incorporation of elements usually attributed to Enoch in Flavius Josephus's story of the Sethites.

[71] al-Mas'ūdī (d. after 956), Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 995), al-Bīrūnī (d. ca 1050), Ibn Hazm (m. 1064), al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik (d. 1087), al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), Ibn al-Qifṭī (d. 1248), Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 1270), and al-Sahahrazūrī (d. between 1287 and 1304) all mention the title either as a prophet of the Harranian Sabeans or as a title given to Agathodaimon and Hermes primarily, and to Seth only by some sources. Van Bladel, *loc. cit.* (see above n. 63), n. 102, pp. 188-189 lists the recent hypothesis on the possible reading of the word. On Agathodaimon, see Corpus Hermeticum XII (in *Corpus hermeticum, Tome 1, Poimandrès*, *Traités II-XII,* ed. and tr. A. D. Nock and A.-J. Festugière, Paris 1946, or the recent translation, B. Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, Cambridge 1992).

[72] A Babylonian, an Egyptian, and a 'biblical' equated with the Qur'ānic Idrīs and the biblical Enoch, also born in Egypt according to some authors. See now K. van Bladel, *loc. cit.* (see above n. 63). The Seth chapter and the Hermes chapter seem to share at least in part some common sources, but this is overlooked by Van Bladel.

Christian heresiographers that the wife of Seth was named Norea[73] (or Horaia in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 39.5.3). In the Gnostic texts which were retrieved from Nag Hammadi she is called Norea and plays the role of the first Eve and the pure woman;[74] she is also the wife and sister of Seth and his female counterpart, sharing in his role of Gnostic savior.[75] A prayer of Norea has been preserved in treatise IX, 2 of Nag Hammadi and she seems to have been venerated by the Nicolaitan Gnostics, a little-known group.[76] According to them she was Noah's wife. This interpretation is somewhat closer to that of the Mandaeans, who have kept references in their writings to the same figure whom they name Nhuraita/ Nuraita, the wife of Shem (= Shum), known in the Bible as the son of Noah.[77]

It is only in the texts depending on al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's *Choicest Maxims* that we find Seth associated with the title or the name *Ūrānī/*Ūriya, and therefore with the Hermetic couple Agathodaimon/Hermes. It is necessary then to turn to the earliest attestations of the word to try and attempt a better reading. Apart from al-Sarakhsī's extract, which is transmitted by Ibn al-Nadīm, the historian and well-travelled geographer al-Mas'ūdī seems to have been the first to mention a title given to Agathodaimon and Hermes.[78] Al-Mas'ūdī stands alone in the context where he is using it, providing some details of the general background where the term was used. The title is here given as *Ūriyā'is which could easily be corrupted into *Ūrānī. We read the following in al-Mas'ūdī's *Golden Meadows*, in a chapter on the divinatory art:[79]

> There were [actually] no people on earth who did not practice divinatory art *(kahhāna)*, and the early Greek philosophers did not reject these arts. It was well-known among them that Pythagoras was famous for having attained certain sciences of the invisible and some kind of inspiration through the purification of his soul

[73] Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, Book I, Chap. 30.9 (ed. Library of the Anti-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, Buffalo 1885).

[74] G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, p. 141

[75] B. A. Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, Minneapolis 1990, pp. 84-94. B. A. Pearson, "From Jewish Apocalypticism to Gnosis," in *The Nag Hammadi Texts in the History of Religions*, ed. S. Giversen, T. Petersen and J. Podemann Sorensen, Copenhagen 2002, p. 151.

[76] Pearson, *loc. cit.*, p. 86; the book of Norea has been published by B. Barc and M. Roberge, *L'Hypostase des archontes. Traité gnostique sur l'origine de l'homme, du monde et des archontes (NH II, 4), suivi de Noréa (NH IX,27,11-29,5)*, Laval-Louvain, 1980.

[77] See Lady Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary*, Oxford 1963, p. 291.

[78] One should also be aware of the fact that Ibn al-Nadīm may have known the *Golden Meadows*, which he mentions in his list of al-Mas'ūdī's books (*al-Fihrist*, I/2, p. 475 ed. A. F. Sayyid).

[79] The edition and translation of Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille is easily accessible since it is now in public domain and is remarkable for having both the Arabic and the French translation on the same page, as well as a general index provided in the last volume: Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'Or*, Paris 1861-1877, 9 vols., t. III, p. 348 (ch. 52). The French translation is often faulty and should be compared (as with the Arabic text, which he re-edited) to Charles Pellat's revised edition, Beirut 1966-1979, t. II, pp. 308-309, and the French translation Pellat published in Paris, 1962-1997.

> and its detachment from worldly dirt.[80] The Sabeans affirm that *Ūrīyāis the First and *Ūrīyāis the Second, who are identical with Hermes and Agathodaimon [sic, *Aghāthīmūn*, for: *Aghāthidīmūn*], were informed of the invisible, and for this reason they were considered prophets by the Sabeans. But they refuse [to say] that the djinns had inspired whom we have just mentioned with any kind of invisible [events], [and rather said] that they purified their souls until they attained to what had been veiled from their fellows." (My translation.)

In this extract, the titles "*Ūrīyāis the First" and "*Ūrīyāis the Second" are given as supplementary names for Hermes and Agathodaimon, without mention of Seth.[81] Nowhere is it said that the word is Greek, but we are told that the Sabeans used it, and we may infer that these Sabeans are Greek-speakers. Al-Masʿūdī was personally acquainted with the family of the 'Ḥarranian Sabeans' whose fame was established by the time. His narration of a visit in the temples of Ḥarran has been the object of some important literature since Chwolsohn's edition and discussion of the extracts in 1856, and recently a thorough analysis has been provided by Michel Tardieu who concluded on the probable genuineness of the Neoplatonist elements depicted by al-Mas'ūdī.[82] In al-Mas'ūdī's extract, the context leads us to suggest that the closest word coming to the mind of a reader familiar with Christian (and Philosophical) texts would certainly be "ūsias," or "essences, natures" in Greek, a favorite term in the discussion on the multiple "natures" of Christ. This reading is difficult to enforce because (a) it necessitates the addition of a dot on the *rā'* of *Ūṟīyāis, and (b) two different letters would have been used for the transliteration of the Greek *sigma* (in one case the *zā'* and in the other the *sin*); this would nevertheless fit a report from oral memory, and we know that al-Mas'ūdī spent some time in Alexandria, whence he drew part of his information on the Christians.

The title reappears in al-Maṣ'ūdī's last work, the *Book of Awakening and Elevation (Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf)*, but this time in a list of the prophets of the Sabeans. The list is given as follows: "Agathodaimon, Hermes, Homer, Aratus, who is the author of a book on the description of the sphere and the stars,[83] Oribasius,[84] *Urani [alternative reading: *Arani], the First and the Second of

[80] See Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*, parag. 29 (ed. Nauck or Des Places). It has been well known since F. Rosenthal, "Arabische Nachrichten iiber Zenon den Eleaten," in *Orientalia*, NS VI (1937), esp. pp. 43-56, that the *Life of Pythagoras* is quoted at length by al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik in his Pythagoras chapter, apparently directly from Porphyry's *Philosophical History*, see Cottrell, forthcoming).

[81] Pellat, *loc. cit.*, prints in his edition "Ūrībāsīs and Ūrfā'īs the first & Ūrfā'īs the second" but translates "Orphée premier et Orphée second", omitting Oribasius, which nevertheless makes sense in the Harranian context.

[82] Michel Tardieu, "Sabiens coraniques et Sabiens de Harran", in *Journal Asiatique*, 274, 1-2, 1986, pp. 1-44.

[83] Probably Aratus' *Phaenomena*.

[84] Oribasius (d. ca. 400) was Emperor Julian's physician. He played an important role in the collection of Galen's works and their subsequent diffusion.

this name, and others," (al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 161 De Goeje/p. 221-222 Carra de Vaux).[85] We can now compare the two extracts with a text which follows chronologically. This time, the Baghdadi book-seller Ibn al-Nadīm mentions in a chapter on the "Chaldean Ḥarranians, also known as the Sabeans" a certain *Urānī/*Arānī (given with a short vowel, at the initial, which may be read u- or a-) as in Mas'ūdī's *Awakening* quoted above. Ibn al-Nadīm states that the prophets of the Sabeans are *Arānī/*Urānī, Agathodaimon, Hermes and Solon (*Fihrist*, p. 358 & A. F. Sayyid). Contrarily to al-Mas'ūdī who does not give his source, the long and detailed extract in Ibn al-Nadīm on the beliefs and practices of the Harranians is given as copied "from an autograph of Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib [al-Sarakhsī] who was transmitting from al-Kindī." Since al-Kindī (d. ca. 866) and al-Sarakhsī (d. ca. 899) are both earlier than al-Masʿūdī, it is possible that the latter relied on the same source as Ibn al-Nadīm. With Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* we see an influential change in that *Arānī/*Urānī becomes a separate figure, one of the prophets of the Ḥarranian Sabeans. The Sarakhsī extract is probably taken from his *Epistle on the Doctrines of the Sabeans* (*Risāla fī waṣf madhāhib al-Ṣābi'īn*), mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm in his bibliography of al-Sarakhsī and explicitely quoted as a source for some parallel information by (Ps?-) al-Maqdīsī.[86]

However, as noted above, al-Mas'ūdī may have had direct access to Ḥarranian materials through his personal acquaintance with Thābit's son, Sinān ibn Thābit. We should note the fact that al-Sarakhsī and Thābit ibn Qurra certainly knew each other, since they had both been close to the caliph al-Mu'taḍid. On the other hand, al-Mas'ūdī does not quote from al-Kindī or from al-Sarakhsī in his *Awakening*.[87] In a seldom-quoted extract, al-Mas'ūdī reports that Thābit was able to participate in an expedition of the caliph al-Mu'taḍid bi-l-Llāh in 863, during which he visited the great temple of Antioch, regarded by the Sabeans as having been built by Asclepius.[88] In another instance, al-Mas'ūdī mentions that Sinān ibn Thābit (d. ca 943), the son of Thābit ibn Qurra (d. 901),

[85] al-Mas'ūdī, *Livre de l'Avertissement et de la Révision*, p. 221-222 tr. Carra de Vaux (= *Tanbīh*, p. 161 ed. De Goeje).

[86] Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, vol. 2/1, p. 197 ed. A. F. Sayyid; (Ps-?) al-Maqdīsī, trans. C. Huart, *Le Livre de la Création et de l'Histoire*, Paris 1899-1919, vol. 1, pp. 131-132 and vol. 4, pp. 20-21.

[87] He does mention al-Kindī in the *Golden Meadows* (see index, *passim*). About al-Sarakhsī, he gives the date and circumstances of his death in 283 AH, after his arrest at the request of the caliph al-Mu'taḍid, although they had been very close to each other. According to al-Mas'ūdī, al-Sarakhsī had been the chief of the *ḥisba* (the caliphal 'weights and measures'), but he fell into disgrace and was executed by Badr, the pageboy of the caliph (see *Prairies d'Or*, vol. 8, p. 179 of the edition and translation by Barbier de Meynard and Pavé de Courteille). His death occurred in 286/899, three years after his arrest, according to F. Rosenthal, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*, vol. IX, p. 34, s. v. al-Sarakhsī. It is almost certain that Thābit ibn Qurra and al-Sarakhsī knew each other.

[88] *Prairies d'Or*, vol. 4, p. 56, ed. and tr. Barbier de Meynard and Pavé de Courteille. Al-Mas'ūdī records that he is writing this piece in 332 AH = 943 AD.

had given him two treatises by his father: one which contained some comments by Galen on some astronomical matters and one commentary by Thābit on Hipparchus, giving some corrections on the Ptolemaic theory of the Sun's apogee (incidentally, Hipparchus is famous for having preserved some of the fragments of the *Phaenomena* written by Aratus).[89] We see then that next to Asclepius, the Sabeans kept some veneration for the famous authors of astrological/astronomical works, something which fits the description of their beliefs given by Ibn al-Nadīm and which definitely separates them from the Mandaeans, as was already demonstrated long ago by Chwolsohn.

I am inclined to suppose that these identifications grew from the accretion of glosses, and that a marginal gloss related to Hermes and Agathodaimon maybe simply a marginal note adding the name Oribasius – was later extended to include Seth. As a matter of fact, Seth and Hermes do not seem to figure together in any classical text.[90]

(4) The mention of the "pious believer" *(al-mu'mīn al-ḥanīfī)* tends to reconcile the belief of the Sabeans with a certain Qur'ānic "orthodoxy." Abraham is called a *ḥanīf* in the Qur'ān, with the probable meaning of "a believer in a religion which existed before Judaism, Christianity and Islam."[91] A precision will be given in the chapter on Hermes (p. 10, ed. Badawī), which may share common sources with the materials used for Seth, namely that the "pure religion" *(al-dīn al-ḥanīfiyya)* is the "right religion" *(al-dīn al-qayyima)*, a reference to Qur'ān 98:5. Much has been written on the ambiguous term *ḥanīf* and its uses in Syriac and in Arabic and this is not the place to discuss it at length.[92] Commenting on a celebrated piece quoted from Thābit's own works by Bar Hebraeus, G. Fowden has recently suggested that the Ḥarranian pagans may have called their religion by the name of *ḥanputa* (Syriac for 'paganism').[93] The word was used with a negative meaning by Christians, but positively in the Qur'ān where the belief in a pre-Abrahamic 'Adamic' state may have been part of the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian polemics. As is well-known, Ḥarrān and Edessa were both claiming for themselves the "pure and

[89] Al-Mas'ūdī, *Livre de l'Avertissement*, p. 296 tr. Carra de Vaux (= *Tanbīh*, p. 106 ed. De Goeje).

[90] Michel Tardieu notes in his "Les Livres mis sous le nom de Seth et les Séthiens de l'Hérésiologie," p. 204, n. 1 (in M. Krause, *Gnosis and Gnosticism*, Leiden 1977) that the twelfth-century Byzantine erudite Ioannes Tzetzes writes in his *Chiliades*, V, v. 781-783, that according to the Hebrews, Seth was the first to invent letters, while according to the Greeks it was Hermes Trismegistos, born in Egypt.

[91] On the term *ḥanīf*, see F. de Blois, "*Naṣrānī* and *ḥanīf*: Studies on the religious vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam," in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 65, 2002, pp. 1–30, discussing on p. 17 the eight verses where it is applied to Abraham.

[92] I hope to address this in a discussion of the recent hypothesis of Tardieu and De Blois about the Sabeans.

[93] See supra, note 67.

true tradition," one boasting its paganism and its Hellenism, and the other boasting its "orthodox" Christianity.[94]

The Sethian precepts

These precepts seem too general to belong specifically to one religion rather than another. They show a broad idea of monotheism and only the element of obedience to the wordly ruler can be said to be extraneous to what is commonly read in religious scriptures. This very element lets doubts arise in the reader as to the possibility of a 'forgery,' a text written with the aim of pleasing some particular audience such as the legal scholars and religious authorities. The Qurʾānic ethics are here represented (e.g. the collection of advices of Luqmān to his son in sūrat 31) and the general meaning of the precepts could be sought in both the Qurʾān and the collections of hadiths.

[Seth #1]: The details about the three classes of angels do not seem to point to one religion in particular, as angels may be found in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Manicheism and Islam, as well as among the different Gnostic movements and in Mandaeism. In the eighth century, the "Sabeans of the Swamps" who were living in the south of Iraq in the area still inhabited to this day by the Mandaeans, were accused by the Muslim authorities of worshipping angels, and denied for this reason the status of *ahl al-kitāb* by the Umayyad governor of Irāq, Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān (d. 672).[95] The lexicographer al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, who settled in Baṣra where he died ca 786 also reports on the Sabeans worshipping angels.[96] As already noted by Gündüz, the early witnesses quoted on the Sabeans generally lived in Iraq and their testimonies should for this reason be relied upon. It is possible that the recurrent mentions of several celestial beings in Mandaean writings and also the use of the angels' names on magical bowls could lead an external observer to conclude that the Mandaeans were worshipping angels, but the *Ginza* expressely forbids such practice.[97] This might have played a role in their exclusion

[94] See Green, *The City of the Moon God. Religious Traditions of Harran*, Leiden-New York-Köln, 1992, pp. 57. In the Hermes chapter, Ibn Fātik's source attributes to Hermes the foundation of Edessa.

[95] According to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728) quoted by al-Ṭabarī, see Gündüz, p. 23.

[96] Gündüz, p. 25, quoting Chwolsohn, vol. 1, p. 188 and further early testimonies (see Gündüz, 25, n. 82 and p. 25, n. 87), especially al-Bīrūnī, *Chronology of the Ancient Nations (al-Āthār al-Bāqiya)*, ed. and tr. E. Sachau, London 1879, p. 188

[97] The religion of the priests who probably followed the *Ginza* may have been slightly different from the practice of the laymen. For the interdiction, see *Right Ginza*, II, 1, nº42, p. 101 Lidzbarski.

from the status they had had before, which had been guaranteed to them by three Qur'ānic verses (2:62; 5:69; 22:17). Before that they seem to have been identified with the Qur'ānic Sabeans.[98] Apart from Theodore bar Konai, whose testimony applies to the Mandaeans of Southern and Central Iraq, we should mention the seldom-quoted poem by the Tāmīmī Arab Ruʾba b. al-ʿAjjāj (d. 762?) discovered by W. Brandt and quoted by C. Kraeling in his study of the Mandeic demiurge Ptahil. Ru'ba b. al-ʿAjjāj uses Ptahil to refer to an "age of Ptahil," a time when people had a longevity similar to that of Noah and other biblical patriarchs; more precisely, according to Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (not quoted by Brandt or Kraeling), it refers to the era after Noah.[99]

The expression *ahl ṭāʿātihi* appears in an early letter on papyrus sent in 758 AD by the newly-appointed governor of Egypt, Mūsā ibn Kaʿb, to the King of Nubia, reminding him that he has accepted a peace treaty. The letter opens with the following greetings: "Peace be upon the friends of God (*awliyāʾ*) and those who obey Him."[100] The expression is commonly used in Islamic literature with reference to the obedient believer.[101]

[Seth #2] is expressed in terms recalling *Qur'ān* 3:104; 9:71; 31:17 etc… on the "Command to do good and the interdiction to commit evil" *(al-amr bi-al-maʿrūf wa-l-nahī ʾan al-munkar).*

[Seth #3] is somewhat ambiguous since we have no specific context. Considering the Fatimid setting of the use of the text, the worldly king should be the Fatimid Ismāʿīli caliph, i.e. the Imam, considered the vice-regent of God on this earth at a higher degree than in the Sunni interpretation of the caliphate.[102] Indeed, the Imam is attributed special powers such as infaillibility.[103] The two mentions of the khalifa and of the sharia should have guaranteed tranquillity to these Sethian believers.

[98] *Pace* Tardieu, "Sabiens coraniques et Sabiens de Harran," and F. C. De Blois, "The 'Sabeans' in Pre-Islamic Arabia,' in *Acta Orientalia*, 56, 1995, pp. 39-61. I hope to develop my critiques in another publication.

[99] C. H. Kraeling, "The Mandaic God Ptahil," in *Journal of the American Oriental Studies*, 53,2, 1933, pp. 152-165, see pp. 156-157.

[100] M. Hinds and H. Sakkout, "A Letter from the Governor of Egypt to the King of Nubia and Muqurra Concerning Egyptian-Nubian Relations in 141/758," in W. al-Qadi (ed.), *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Ihsān 'Abbās on His Sixtieth Birthday*, Beirut 1981, pp. 209-229; same use in the greetings of a private letter from al-Fayyūm preserved in the Papyrus Marchands, II, 33, ed. Y. Ragheb, *Marchands d'étoffes du Fayyoum au IIIe/IXe siècle d'après leurs archives (actes et lettres),* Cairo 1982-1996 (the letter is accessible on-line at http://orientw.uzh.ch/apd/project.jsp).

[101] For example in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, etc.

[102] On the caliphate and the use of the term "khalīfa" see the extensive study by W. al-Qāḍī, "The Term "Khalīfa" in Early Exegetical Literature," in *Die Welt des Islams*, 28, 1988, pp. 392-411.

[103] See M.–A. Amir-Moezzi, article 'Shi'ite Doctrine,' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica, loc. cit.*

In Mandaeic the word *mlaka* is especially difficult to translate as it retains both meanings of the Semitic root: 'angel' (ar. *malak*) and 'king' (ar. *malik*).[104] However, we read in the *Ginza* that Mandaeans should not participate in the affairs of the world or get close to kings and princes. This precept is then in contradiction with Mandaean teachings. It is possible the Mandaeans had a hierarch in charge of their relations with the Muslim authorities who was not one of their priests.[105]

[Seth #4] is famously one of the commandments received by Moses but it also figures in the list of prescriptions given in the second treatise of the *Right Ginza*.[106] See *Qurʾān* 2:83 etc. for the prescription to do good to one's parents, the orphans and the poor.

[Seth #5] uses the same expression as #2, *"al-maʿrūf,"* which came to carry the meaning of "performing good actions" in the expression quoted in #2, but is actually a usage derived from the root *ʿayn-rāʾ-fāʾ* which also gave the word *"al-ʿurf,"* i.e. "the accepted custom."[107]

[Seth #6] is repeated several times in the *Ginza* (and extended to the obligation to give food to someone who is hungry, water to someone who is thirsty and clothes to someone who is naked) and is sometimes connected with a commentary recalling an often-used Arabic saying: "When you give alms, do not show off: what you are doing with your one hand should not even be known by the other hand."[108] The Qurʾān also repeats the obligation to feed the poor (Qurʾān, 2:83; 22:28; 22:36 etc.).

[Seth #7] is clearly paralleled in the *Ginza*: "Provide to whoever is wandering in a foreign land food and shelter, bread and water, and give him provisions for his travel."[109] The same rule is usually preserved, as also the prescription of giving alms, in the tribal code of the Arab tribes.

[Seth #8] Courage is not particularly emphasized in the Mandaean scriptures, since the Mandaeans are expected to avoid all violence. Spiritual courage will be discussed below with the precept encouraging steadfastness. The expression "Lord of the Universe" *(rabb al-ʿālamīn)* is commonly attributed to God (*Qurʾān* 1:2; 2:131; 5:28 etc.). The reference to courage is followed in the list

[104] See Gündüz, *The Knowledge of Life*, p. 27 and Macuch-Drower, *Mandaic Dictionary*, p. 244-245.
[105] *Right Ginza*, II, 1, nº87, p. 40 Lidzbarski.
[106] *Right Ginza*, II, 1, nº35, p. 35 Lidzbarski.
[107] And by extension "the tribal code of practices" *(al-qanūn al-ʿurfī)*.
[108] *Right Ginza*, II, 1, nº34, p. 35 Lidzbarski; II, 1, nº64, p. 38 Lidzbarski; II, 1, nº42, p. 36 Lidzbarski.
[109] *Right Ginza*, II, 1, nº90, p. 41 Lidzbarski.

by the prescription of other virtues: temperance, patience, justice, constancy and steadfastness. We cannot exclude here the possibility of a direct allusion to some parts of the Mandaean scriptures, since we can read in the *Left Ginza* repeated lists of virtues which the believer has to put into practice in order to be rewarded when his soul ascends to heaven.

[Seth #9] can be understood as a reference to virtuous behaviour or more probably to the interdiction of dancing and listening to music which is repeated in the *Ginza* in several places.[110]

[Seth #10] is a commonplace of the Ginza precepts.[111]

[Seth #11 and #12] on veracity and justice may be taken from the list of virtues of the *Left Ginza*, but should also be compared to the important notion of Qushta in the Mandaean religion.[112]

III. SHAMS AL-DĪN AL-SHAHRAZŪRĪ AL-ISHRĀQĪ AND HIS CHAPTERS ON ADAM AND SETH

Finally, we shall turn to the thirteenth-century author Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī al-Ishrāqī (d. between 687/1288 and 704/1304), a little-known Muslim philosopher and self-proclaimed disciple of the "martyred Shaykh" Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, who was put to death in Aleppo in 1191 or around that date.[113] Suhrawardī's attempts to convert the circles of power to his personal vision of an Islamic syncretistic philosophy may have led to his tragic death.[114] Al-Shahrazūrī's commentaries on Suhrawardī's works and his personal compositions were the first attempt of a systematization of Ishrāqī philosophy.[115] Shahrazūrī's synthesis also played an important role in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iran, when Ishrāqī philosophy was the object of renewed

[110] *Right Ginza*, I, nº146, p. 22; II, 1, nº59, p. 38 Lidzbarski. Cf. *Right Ginza* XVII, p. 216, ll. 16-26 for a list of the contemptible qualities and actions.

[111] *Right Ginza*, I, nº101, p. 17; I, 2, nº38, p. 35; I, 2, nº60, p. 38; II, 1, nº155; VII, 2, ll. 23-24, p. 405 Lidzbarski. *Left Ginza* II, 17, p. 485 Lidzbarski.

[112] *Right Ginza*, II, 1, nº72, p. 39 (Seth #11); II, 1, nº30, p. 35 (Seth #11 and 12).

[113] Biographies of Suhrawardī are preserved by Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, and al-Shahrazūrī, all of whom lived during the century following his death. See H. Ziai, art. "Suhrawardī, Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, vol. IX, pp. 782-784.

[114] H. Ziai, "Source and nature of authority. A study of Suhrawardī's Illuminationist political doctrine," in C. Butterworth (ed.), *The political aspects of Islamic philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1992, pp. 304-344.

[115] Ibn Kammūna preceded Shahrazūrī as an ishrāqī commentator, but he did not attempt the systematization realized by his younger contemporary. See E. Cottrell, "al-Shahrazūrī", in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Dordrecht 2011, vol. 2, pp. 1190-1194.

interest.[116] In India too, Shahrazuri's work was held in particular esteem at the Golconda court (ca 1364–1512)[117] and in the early Moghol circles, through its circulation both in Arabic and in a Persian translation.[118]

Presumably, Shahrazūrī was born during the first half of the thirteenth century since the oldest manuscript bearing his name is dated 665 of the Hijra calendar (1266-1267 AD).[119] Shahrazūrī lived during the tragic epoch of the Mongol invasion and consequent destruction of wide areas of the Middle East. His whereabouts are difficult to reconstruct but he was certainly contemporary to the Fall of Baghdad in 1258. His works point to the use of very extensive libraries, which in this apocalyptic period may only have been available in a limited number of places. A minor figure himself, leaving no trace in the biographical dictionaries written about his epoch, he may have been close to the intellectuals of the time, such as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1311), and may have become closer to the new circles of power. His familiarity with sources used during the same period by scholars such as Bar Hebraeus and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī point to Maragha, Malatya and Siwas as the possible places of his activity. As the Ismā'īlī strongholds in Iran, Iraq and Syria were being wiped out by the Mongols, important scholars who had been involved with the "Assassins" such as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī became involved in the new administration.[120] Shahrazūrī mentions al-Ṭūsī as having recently passed away in both his *Promenade of Souls and Garden of Rejoicings in the History of Philosophers*[121] (*Kitāb Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa rawḍat al-afrāḥ fī ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā',* from now on: *History of Philosophers*) and in his *Epistles of the Divine Tree (Rasā'il al-shajara al-ilāhiyya).*

Aside from commentaries on Suhrawardī's works, al-Shahrazūrī is the author of personal compositions such as the *Divine symbols and parables (Kitāb al-Rumūz wa al-amthāl al-ilāhiyya)*, the *History of Philosophers* and

[116] On Ishrāqī philosophy, or 'Philosophy of Illumination,' as coined by Henry Corbin, see Hossein Ziai, "The Illuminationist Tradition," in *The Routledge History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. S. H. Nasr and Oliver Leaman, London, 1995, pp. 465-496 and Id., "Illuminationism," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, accessible online at http://www.iranica.com/articles/illuminationism, in addition to the classical works of H. Corbin, Ch. Jambet, H. Ziai, and M. A. Amir-Moezzi.

[117] The Berlin manuscript (Berlin, Or. Landberg 430) of al-Shahrazūrī's *Promenade of Souls (Nuzhat al-arwāḥ…)* shows seals from the Golconda court, as was kindly indicated to me by Francis Richard (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

[118] The Persian translation by Muḥammad 'Alī Tabrīzī (XVIth c.) was edited by M. T. Dānishpazūh and M. S. Mawlā'ī (Tehran 1987), but the editors did not have access to the numerous manuscripts held at the British Library.

[119] Manuscript Istanbul, Esat Efendi 3804, fol. 1a.

[120] See H. Dabashi, "Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī: the philosopher/vizier and the intellectual climate of his times," in S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, London 1996, pp. 527-584.

[121] In a supplement contained only in the Longer Recension: Al-Shahrazūrī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. Abū Shuwayrib, Tripoli (Lybia) 1988 (repr. Paris 2007), pp. 397-398.

the *Epistles of the Divine Trees*. The *History of the Philosophers* gives a historiographical framework which fits Suhrawardī's own peculiar understanding of the history of wisdom which he considers as starting from a double lineage of Persian kings and Hermetic and Platonist philosophers and alchemists. Insisting on the necessity of meditation and the practice of virtues, Shahrazūrī draws the examples of some one hundred and thirty figures of wisdom, philosophers and scientists, but also and more surprisingly, prophets. Explicitly inviting his readers to imitate these models in their spiritual exercises, to meditate on their books and their wise sayings, Shahrazūrī claims this path is a way to attain the contemplation of the higher realities and ultimately of the higher principle.[122] For this reason and in full appreciation of the influence of this school on early Islamic philosophy, Dozy was entitled to translate the term "ishrāqī-s" into the Latin "neoplatonici" in the description he gave of a manuscript of the *History of Philosophers* preserved in the library of Leiden University (CCO III, 342-346/Codex 1488 = Golius 64).

In his *History of the Philosophers*, al-Shahrazūrī drew heavily on earlier authors, but the synthesis he offers is personal: he compiled mainly from the epitome *(muntakhab)* of the *Chestbox of Wisdom (Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma)* attributed to Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī's *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma* (tenth century), Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* (tenth century), Ṣa'īd al-Andalūsī's *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* (eleventh century), al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's *Mukhtār al-ḥīkam* (eleventh century) and Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma* (twelfth century).[123] The book is composed of one hundred and thirty chapters (forty 'Ancients' and ninety 'Moderns') consisting of a biography, a doxography and some sayings, when such elements were available. Only one chapter of the *History of Philosophers* was regularly quoted and translated: the biography of the Persian philosopher Suhrawardī, where Shahrazūrī underlines his practice of spiritual exercises such as fasting and meditating until his execution at the Aleppo citadel in 1191.

As this 'history of wisdom' opens with Adam and Seth chapters, we must briefly describe the contents of the introduction which precedes them. The *History of Philosophers* starts with an introduction on the origins of philosophy which is made up of extracts taken from the classical Arabic sources mentioned above. After his prayer to God and the prophet Muḥammad, Shahrazūrī gives a list of suspicious *ḥadīth*-s partly taken from al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's own

[122] In the introduction of *The Promenade of the Souls*, Abū Shuwayrib, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*, pp. 33-56, translation in E. Cottrell, "Les Philosophes grecs dans le *Kitāb Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa Rawḍat al-afrāḥ fī Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*," Diplôme de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (5e section), Paris 1999, see p. 42.

[123] In the longer version, Shahrazūrī added some extracts from Shahrastānī's *Book of Religions and Sects*. On Shahrazūrī's use of his sources in the different versions of his *History of the Philosophers*, see E. Cottrell, "Shams Al-Dīn Al-Shahrazūrī et les manuscrits de *La Promenade des âmes et le Jardin des réjouissances: Histoire des philosophes*," in *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 56 (2004-2005), pp. 225-260.

introduction enjoining the practice of philosophy (or rather 'wisdom,' *ḥikma*). He then exhorts his reader to follow the path of wisdom by imitating the philosophers and the prophets. What distiguishes the former from the latter is the way in which they attain wisdom: philosophers study a received transmission, while prophets have a direct apprehension.[124] Al-Shahrazūrī specifically mentions Adam, Seth, Idrīs, Noah, David and Salomon as wise and virtuous people who authored books. His decision to begin the history of philosophy with Adam and Seth is then related at least in part to the existence of books transmitted under their names.[125]

Later on, the classical theory of the Greek origin of philosophy (through Thales, and the Presocratics to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle…) is given according to Pseudo-Plutarch's *Opinions of the Philosophers*, after a short introduction on the history and the geography of the Greeks and the Latins. After the Pseudo-Plutarch's extracts (quoted from the *Chestbox of Wisdom (Muntakhab Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*), a synchronization between the Greek philosophers and the Persian kings is attempted and followed by extracts taken from a universal history where the inventions of astronomy by the Babylonians, and of medicine by the Syrians, are also considered. Quoting from Ibn al-Nadīm's *Catalogue (al-Fihrist)*, al-Shahrazūrī emphasizes the role of the Babylonians in developing and preserving the sciences, until the destruction caused by Alexander the Great's conquest. A revival of the sciences, specifically linked with the role they had in the Zoroastrian religion, would have occured under the Sassanids, given as the Persian dynasty which had reunified the kingdom as it had been before Alexander's conquest. Shahrazūrī discloses his own inclination to the theory of an Eastern origin of wisdom by reporting that the very invention of logic was made possible to Aristotle from the looting of the ancient books of the Persians by Alexander. Finally, the famous narrative of the caliph al-Ma'mūn's dream of Aristotle (also taken from Ibn al-Nadīm) is inserted as one of the reasons which incited the Abbasid court to sponsor scientific research.

The Adam Chapter

Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. Abū Shuwayrib, Tripoli 1988 (Lybia) [reprint Paris 2007], p. 56

1 أوّل الحكماء آدم أبو البشر (صلوات الله تعالى عليه و سلامه).
2 فكان في أوّل الدور الأوّل بعد خراب الرَبْع المسكون بالطوفان.

[124] al-Shahrazūrī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*, p. 36 ed. Abū Shuwayrib.

[125] As seen already in part I, early Christian heresiographers such as Epiphanius knew of seven books attributed to Seth (*Panarion* 39.5.1) and claim that a sectarian group was considering him to be the actual Christ (Pseudo-Tertullian, *Refutation of all Heresies*, chap. XLVII).

3 و هو أوّل من استخرج الصنائع و آلاتها و علّمها أولاده، و استخرج أيضاً العلوم و دوّنها لاولاده. **4** و رأيتُ بعض كتبه في التعفينات[126] و بعض الصنائع و العلوم. **5** و علِم الأسماء المذكورة[127] في قوله تعالى: (وَ عَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ كلَّهَا). **6** و عاش دهراً طويلاً، و كان رجلاً فاضلاً عظيم القدر جليل الشأن أوّل أنبياء الله تعالى و رُسُله (عليهم الصلاة و السلام).

Translation

(1) The first sage was Adam, the Father of Mankind (May God the Exalted pray on him and may peace be upon him). (2) He lived during the first cycle after the destruction of the inhabited area of the earth by the Flood *(al-ṭawfān)*. (3) He was the first to invent the techniques and the appropriate tools and to teach these to his sons. Moreover, he invented the sciences and wrote them down for his sons. (4) I have seen some of his books, on the leavens (*fī al-taʿfīnāt*, lit. 'on the putrefactions') and on the techniques and sciences. (5) And he learned the names as mentioned in His speech, may He be exalted: "And He taught Adam all the names. [Qur'ān 2:31]." (6) Adam lived a long time, was a virtuous man, of great stature and good composition, and the first prophet and envoy of God the Exalted.

Commentary

(1-2) Shahrazūrī gives Adam the title "father of mankind" (1) but he immediately adds that Adam lived after the Flood (2), therefore diverging from the Biblical narrative of Genesis. The idea that Adam lived after the Flood has to be understood in the specific context of competing narratives on ancient history and not as an indication that Adam may have survived the Flood. Chronographers basing themselves on biblical history consider that Adam died in the year 930 and that the Flood happened either in year 1307, 1656 [Bīrūnī, *Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, p. 25 tr. Sachau, specifying that this is the interval according to the Jews, but that according to the Samaritans it is 1307 years) or 2242 (Agapius, *Kitāb al-ʿUnwān*, in *Patrologia Orientalis* vol. 8, p. 455 tr. Vasiliev; Bīrūnī, *Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, p. 25 tr. Sachau, mentions this date as specific to the Christian version of the Bible; Bar Hebraeus (quoting Josephus), *Chronography*, p. 6 tr. Budge).[128] The question

[126] Abū Shuwayrib reads التعفيات; I emend with Sayyid Khurshid Aḥmad's edition of al-Shahrazūrī *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Arwāḥ* (= *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*) (Hyderabad 1976), p. 48, l. 2 and note 2 on the same page (the emended words also correspond with the ductus as transmitted in MS Berlin Landberg 430, fol. 7a).

[127] Abū Shuwayrib has: الأسماء The correction is supplied from MS Berlin, Landberg 430 and from the good but slightly-less-accessible Indian edition provided by Sayyid Khurshid Aḥmad.

[128] Bīrūnī adds to this that Annianus mentioned the interval of 2226 years (and twenty-three days and four hours) between the creation of Adam and the day the flood began, but comments

of the Flood was an object of debate among historians during the early Abbasid period depending on whether they were or were not pro-Persian, as was already established by Hartman.[129] Al-Bīrūnī reports that the Persians and most of the Zoroastrians denied the Flood (as would the Indians, the Chinese, and the various nations of the East, according to him), since they had recorded a continuous lineage of their kings since Gayomarth Gilshah, who was considered their first man.[130] Evidently, the Persians tended to consider all their history as antediluvian. Ṭabarī, al-Isfahānī, and al-Bīrūnī all mention that the Persians had a continuous chronology of their kings and no mention of the Flood as it is narrated in the Bible.

> Hartman presented a survey of the Islamic tradition (in both the Arabic and Persian writings) on Gayōmarth, the first man according to the ancient Iranian mythology which remains largely unexploited. Organizing widely contradictory material, Hartman shows that the protohuman Gayōmarth is considered alternatively as a Djinn, as a descendent of Adam, as identical to the Chaldean king Aloros, or as having simply preceded Adam. Authors such as Ba'lamī and (Ps-?) al-Maqdīsī, who wrote their works in 964 and 966 respectively consider Gayōmarth as the father of Adam, but Ba'lamī also knows of several authors who assimilated them in one single figure.[131] Ṭabarī, writing in 912-913 notes that the question is debated (Tabari, *Ta'rīkh*, I 147-148; but see I, 17, where he notes that the ancient Persians situated Gayomarth 3139 years before the Hijra of Muḥammad (622 AH) and that Gayomarth was considered by them to be the same as Adam) but shortly after him, al-Mas'ūdī notes that only a minority of Persians would consider Gayomarth as the first human (*Murūj*, II 105, quoted by Hartman). Other authors would have it that Gayōmarth was a son of Adam, sometimes equated with one of the patriarchs or their descendants.

(2) To insist on the fact that Adam was not the first man on earth, Shahrazūrī mentions the Flood as having destroyed the "inhabited area" of the earth (*al-rab'*, or *al-rub' al-maskūn*) or *oikoumene*.[132] The fact that he gives Adam the

that the figure seems somehow too precise and must have been obtained by an astronomical calculation which does not fit historical reports. He notes that he found this report of Annianus in Ibn al-Bazyār's *Book of Conjunctions (Kitāb al-Qirānāt)*.

[129] Sven S. Hartman, "Les Identifications de Gayomart à l'époque islamique," in S. S. Hartman *Syncretism (Symposium on Cultural Contact, Abo 8-10th September 1966)*, Stockholm 1969, pp. 263-294. See further A. Christensen, *Le premier homme et le premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens* I, Stockholm, 1917; II, Leiden, 1934; S. Hartman, *Gayōmart*, Uppsala, 1953.

[130] Al-Bīrūnī, The Chronology of Ancient Nations, p. 107 tr. Sachau; up-to-date bibliography in M. Shaki, art. "Gayomart," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, accessible online at http://www.iranica.com/articles/gayomart-.

[131] See Hartman, op. cit., pp. 268-270; pp. 272-273. An element which favored the parallel was that both Gayomart in the Mazdean tradition (as reported in the *Bundashihn*) and Adam were made of clay.

[132] Hamza al-Isfahānī, *Ta'rīkh sinī al-muluk*, p. 6, Berlin 1921 ed. Kaviani; Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il*, I, p. 163 ed. Beirut; Wadie Jwaideh, *The introductory Chapters of Yāqūt's Mu'jam al-Buldān*, Leiden 1959, p. 38s. 1 Enoch 77,1-3 (Book of Astronomy) divides the world into four parts. Man's dwelling is in one of the three parts of the fourth quarter. This view opposes the seven-climate theory of the Greeks. See E. Honigmann, *Die Sieben Klimata*, Heidelberg 1929.

title of "father of Mankind" does not necessarily contradict this point. The Shī'i author Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman (mid-tenth century) writes in his *Asrār al-nutaqā'* that "father of Mankind" *(abū al-bashar)* is merely a title given to Adam to emphasise his superiority in God's obedience (p. 31).[133]

> Hartman notes that a number of authors mention a Flood which would have affected only the clime of Babel, while the descendants of Gayōmarth were living somewherein the East and kept unharmed from it (implying thus the continuity of Iranian royalty, in the traditions taking Gayōmarth as the first king and not solely as the first man). Both al-Ṭabarī and al-Bīrūnī have this report, but only the latter places this partial Flood at the time of the mythical king Tahmurath (= Taḫmōruf).[134] This Flood, which occurred under Taḫmōruf's reign, is also described by Hamza al-Isfahani (writing in 961) and by al-Shahrazūrī in his introduction of the *History of Philosophers*, quoting from Ibn al-Nadīm. It should be noted that Taḫmōruf, who was considered the first king and often the first man according to the reports of al-Mas'ūdī and Yāqūt (quoted by Christensen, p. 136), also appears in the Mandaean *Ginza*, where it is said that he reigned for six hundred years some time after Gayomarth (Christensen, pp. 192-193). Shahrazūrī in his introduction to the *History of the Philosophers*, reports of the ancient legends about the invention of sciences, and their diffusion and continuity through their preservation by a mythical Persian king, Taḫmōruf, who had foreseen a coming Flood caused by abundant rains thanks to his knowledge of astrology and astronomy (same report in Hamza al-Isfahani).[135]

(3) Al-Shahrazūrī's presentation of Adam is reminiscent of the literature of inventions, although the idea of inventing "the techniques and the sciences" is slightly too general in comparison to what we can read in *The Historical Library* of Diodorus Siculus, Books 1-4 or in Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica*.[136] The example of the *Book of the Leavens* or *Putrefactions* attributed to Adam is cited as supporting the common knowledge of the existence of Adamic books as well as to provide the reader with an idea of some of the techniques Adam had invented. Book-composition as well as a role in the development of civilization are here considered as prophetic features. The subject of this book may be seen as agronomical or even alchemical, and is reminiscent of Ibn Waḥshiyya's *Nabatean Agriculture*, where Adam and other ancient sages play a role in the invention of the culture of the vine, of the palm tree, etc.[137] The word used by Shahrazūrī, *al-ta'fīnāt*, appears precisely in Ibn Waḥshiyya, who is mentioned

[133] Ja'far ibn Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Asrār al-nutaqā,* p. 31

[134] Hartman*, loc. cit*., n. 80 and n. 81 p. 291.

[135] Translation in Christensen, loc. cit., pp. 196-1988 see Gutas, *Greek Thought Arabic Culture*, p. 38 and D.Pingree, *The Thousand of Abu Ma'shar*, London 1968, pp. 9-10.

[136] F. Rosenthal, art. Awā'īl, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, vol. I, pp. 758-759; A. J. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Interpretations of the History of Culture*, Tübingen, 1989.

[137] See the excellent study of Jaakko Hameen Anttila, *The Last Pagans Of Iraq*, Leiden 2006, who replaces the *Nabatean Agriculture* in the ancient Babylonian and Sumerian lore.

elsewhere in al-Shahrazūrī's works.[138] The term *Ishrāqiyyūn*, to designate the descendents of Hermes' sister, was coined by Ibn Waḥshiyya (?) in his *Kitāb al-Shawq al-Mustaham fī maʿrifat rumūz al-aqlām* (lit. *'Flowing Desire for the Knowledge of the Symbols traced by Pens'*).[139]

> When people understood the manner of how Nature works, (…) they generated many plants and called this action *tawlīdāt* – others call this putrefaction *(taʿfīnāt)*, whilst yet others call it generation *(takwīnāt)*. (…) Now we shall return to the generation of plants which have wonderful actions, similar to those of the generated animals except that they are not quite like them. They are not merely a little below them but much below them. The generation of all species of plants happens through burying in earth things from which plants will grow. Yanbūshād turned his attention towards this and he has helped us by teaching us many things about it, more than what Adam had mentioned in the *Book of the Secrets of the Moon (Kitāb Asrār al-qamar)*. (…) As far as we know, this did not happen before Adam to any human being and no thinker had arrived at it through his thought and no inventor had invented it by himself.[140]

(5) The Names are a favourite theme of literature related to Adam.[141] In *Qur'ān* 2:31-33, after Adam has told the angels their own names, in addition to the names of things, there is an ambiguity in verse 2:33 whether it is God or Adam who says that he knows the hidden secrets of both the heavens and the earth. Through this knowledge, Adam affirms his superiority over the Angels and is designed as the caliph of God on earth, to rule both Djinns and Men. The Angels are then asked by God to bow to Adam in sign of submission: see *Qur'ān* 2:34; 7:11; 15:30-31; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116; 38:71-76. This narrative appears in the Mandaean *Ginza*[142] but also in the *Cave of Treasures*[143]

[138] In his *Epistles of the Tree of Wisdom*, Epistle 1, chapter 2 (*Rasā'il al-Shajara al-ilāhiyya fi 'ulūm al-haqā'iq al-rabbāniyya*, ed. Mehmet Necip Görgün, Istanbul 2004, vol. 1, p. 7 of the edited text), al-Shahrazūrī writes that according to the people of the clime of Babylon, wisdom came from their country and its people. Shahrazūrī adds that Ibn Waḥshiyya specifies that among the people of Babylon, it was the Chaldean Nabateans who discovered the philosophical sciences.

[139] This authorship is rejected by Hameen-Anttila, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Weak edition and translation by J. Hammer (= Hammer-Purgstall), *Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained: with an account of the Egyptian priests, their classes, initiation and sacrifices, by Ahmad bin Abubekr bin Wahshih* (= Waḥshiyya), London, 1806, tr. pp. 29-30/Ar. p. 101; compare the translation by S. Matton, *Magie arabe traditionnelle* (includes a translation of Ibn Waḥshiyya's *al-Shawq al-mustaham*), Paris 1976.

[140] Jaakko Hameen Anttila, The *Last Pagans Of Iraq,* Text 42, pp. 290-293 (Arabic, pp. 1317-1319, ed. T. Fahd).

[141] See F. Rosenthal (introd. and transl.), *The History of al-Tabari, I, General Introduction and From the Creation to the Deluge*, Albany 1989, pp. 266-269 (De Goeje, vol. 1, pp. 95-98).

[142] Translation of this extract which is repeated several time in the *Ginza* in K. Rudolph, *Gnosis. A Selection of Gnostic Texts. II. Coptic and Mandean Sources*, Oxford 1974, pp. 183-184.

[143] See J. Reeves, *Heralds*, p. 60, who traces the *Cave of Treasures*'s narrative – which is extremely close to the story as we have it in the *Qur'ān* – to an extract of the Cologne Mani Codex, where the angel of Light instructing Adam is called Balsamos, possibly the same figure as the Qur'ānic Iblis.

and in the *Pirke* of Rabbi Eliezer[144] with some discrepancies. Adam's superiority over the angels is demonstrated by his knowledge of either the secret Name of God or by his earlier teaching of the Names of everything in creation (as in Gn 2:18-20), as we can read in the *Cave of Treasures* and in the Samaritan scriptures.[145]

(6) The portrait of Adam is given according to well-established literary topoi noted already by F. Rosenthal in the chapters he studied on the ancient Pre-Socratic philosophers in al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik.[146] Wahb ibn Munabbih gives such a description of David in his *Beginning of Creation*, and we may wonder whether this was once connected with an iconography.[147]

The Seth Chapter

For the Seth chapter, Shahrazūrī copied al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's information, as he also did for the other twenty figures he took over from the latter's *Choicest Maxims*, adding to his chapters extra materials mainly from the *Muntakhab Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*. Nevertheless, the author of the *Promenade of the Souls* made some additions of his own, which can be demonstrated to allude to the Mandaeans, whom Shahrazūrī identifies with the 'Sabeans of the Marshes,' like Bīrūnī and others authors before him.

As the chapter is taken from al-Mubashshir, we will comment only on the elements added by al-Shahrazuri, which we have displayed in bold font. The manuscripts of *The Promenade of Souls* show the existence of three different recensions. There are two main recensions, a short recension and a long recension, with the use in the longer one of lengthy extracts from al-Shahrastānī's heresiographical *Kitāb al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*. A third recension is that of the earliest manuscript, contained in a collection of scientific works and dated 665 AH (1266-1267 AD). This earlier recension already betrays the use of al-Mubashshir Ibn Fātik's *Choicest Maxims* and of al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*.[148]

[144] See J. Bowman, "The Qur'ān and Biblical History," in *Ex Orbe Religionum. Studia Geo Widengren oblate*, vol. 2, Leiden 1972, pp. 111-158 who argued that this midrash was available to the prophet Muḥammad, although it seems now that the text can be dated to the ninth century

[145] See J. Reeves, *Heralds*, p. 76 translating from the *Cave of Treasures*.

[146] See e.g. his translation of the biography of Plato in F. Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (tr. of Id., *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam*), London 1965, pp. 28-29. For the parallel he made with Islamic biographies, see his "Arabische Nachrichten über Zenon den. Eleaten," in *Orientalia* 6 (1937), pp. 21-67, on pp. 65-67.

[147] R. G. Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih. Teil 1. Der Heidelberger Papyrus PSR Heid. Arab 23*, Wiesbaden 1972, Hadīth Dawūd, GD7, 18-19, p. 50 ar./p. 51 tr.

[148] See E. Cottrell, "Shams al-Dîn al-Shahrazûrî et les manuscrits de *La Promenade des Âmes et le Jardin des Réjouissances*: Histoire des Philosophes (*Nuzhat al-'Arwâh wa-Rawdat al-'Afrâh fî Ta'rîkh al-Hukamâ'*)," in *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* LVI (2004-2005), pp. 225-260.

Earlier recension

Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, MS Esad Efendi 3804, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā' al-yūnāniyya*, fol. 165-end.[149]

1 شيث بن آدم (عليه السلام). 2 و هو اوريا الأوّل عند اليونانيين.
3 و هو أوّل من أخذوا عنه الشريعة و الحكمة
4 و له كتاب يسمّى الزبور الأوّل يريد على المائة سورة طوال و قصار.
5 و اليه تنسب الصابئة الذين في بطائح العراق و يقرون بنبوته. 6 و الأظهر أنّ مسكنه كان في بلاد الشام.

(1) Seth, son of Adam (Peace be upon them). (2) He is the First *Ūrīā/ Awriā among the Greeks. (3) And the first from whom religious law and wisdom were taken. (4) He has a book **called the *First Psalm*, which contains about one hundred sūrats, long and short**. (5) The Sabeans who are in the marshes of Iraq[150] claim that they are descended from him and they acknowledge his prophecy. (6) And it seems that he originated from Syria *(bilād al-Shām)*.

(4) The attribution to Seth of a book called the *First Psalm* is proper to al-Shahrazūrī and the later authors who copied from him.[151] The early mystic Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728) states that the Sabeans were worshipping angels, praying towards the qibla (=Mecca?) and reading the Psalms (*Zabūr*).[152] Again Qatāda ibn Di'āmak al-Sadūsī (d. 736), who lived in Wasit and Basra, states that the Sabeans worship angels, read the Psalms and pray five times every day.[153] The same is attested by the legal authority Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767) and from the lexicographer Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 786) who also lived in South Iraq (Basra and Kufa).[154] The word *al-Zabūr* is used in the Qur'ān to designate the *Psalms* of David, which are considered part of the holy scriptures (*Qur'ān* 4:163; 17:55). The description of the "long and short chapters" (*sūrat*-s) is appropriate for the *Ginza*, which remarkably has not been attributed to Adam here or mentioned as "*The Book of Adam*," as it was in later times.[155]

[149] The modern pagination does not seem consistent, as the two last folios are given the numbers 216 and 218 respectively (sic). I am grateful to the authorities of the Suleymaniyye Library for providing me with a reproduction of this manuscript.

[150] Cf. M. Streck, art. al-Baṭīḥa, *Encylopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, vol. I, pp. 1093-1095.

[151] Such as the text quoted by Chwolsohn, *Ssabier*, vol. II, p. 545, quoting F. C. Belfour, *The Life of Scheikh Muhammad Ali Hazin*, p. 160 ff, London 1830. This autobiography was finished before 1742, and probably made use of al-Shahrazūrī's *History of Philosophers*.

[152] See S. Gündüz, *The Knowledge of Life*, p. 23.

[153] S. Gündüz, *op. cit*., p. 24.

[154] S. Gündüz, *op. cit*., p. 25. On the texts of Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Bīrūnī used by Chwolsohn in his theory regarding the references to the Mandaeans of the Swamps and the Zabūr, see J. Hjärpe, *Analyse critique des traditions arabes sur les sur les Sabéens harraniens*, Uppsala 1972, pp. 9-11.

[155] See J. Buckley, *The Great Stem of Souls*. Piscataway 2006, p. 97 and pp. 225-226.

(6) The association of Seth with Syria is a puzzling one.[156] It seems to refer to the origin of the Sabeans venerating Seth as their prophet. This would be in compliance with the Western origin claims by the Mandaean Sabeans, which has been accepted by both linguists (Greenfield) and by historians of religions (Macuch).[157]

The Seth chapter in the Long recension

Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. Abū Shuwayrib, Tripoli 1988 [reprint Paris, 2007], p. 56.

1 ولده شيث عليه السلام. ثمّ ولده شيث. و هو أوريا الأوّل **و هو أيضاً أغاثاذيمون أستاذ هرمس الهرامسة المسمّى عند العرب بإدريس** عليه السلام.
2 و هو أوّل من أُخِذ عنه الشريعة و الحكمة.
3 و الصابئة تنتسب إليه و تعترف بنبوّته،
4 و لهم كتب أحكام، **بعضها منسوبة إلى شيث** عليه السلام **و بعضها إلى يحيى بن زكريا** عليه السلام ،
5 **و لا يقولون بقيامة الأجساد بل الأرواح.**
6 **و لهم كتابٌ و حروفٌ بالنبطية قديمةٌ على هجاء أبجد، و ليس لهم أ ب ت ث.**
7 و لهم كتاب يسمونه الزبور الأوّل و هو مائة **و عشرون صورة**، كبار و صغار.
8 و قبلتهم بيت المقدّس، **و الله أعلم بمسكنه من الأرض.** و لعلّ الأظهر أنّه كان بالشام أو **بصعيد مصر.**

Translation

(1) His son Seth. He is the first *Ūriya[158] and he is also [known as] Agathodaemon, the teacher of Hermes of the 'Hermeses' [i.e. Hermes Trismegistos],[159]

[156] The legend of the steles of Seth transmitted by Josephus places the steles in the moutain of Charax, located in the land of Seiris (see Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, n. 3 p. 115-116 for a Syrian Charax and p. 119 for the mention in the Balaam's prophecy of the "sons of Seth" and their localization in Syria and Transjordan).

[157] In J. C. Greenfield, "On Mandaic Poetic Technique," in M. Macuch, C. Müller-Kessler (eds.), *Studia Semitica necnon Iranica*, Wiesbaden 1989, pp. 101-109, reprint in S. M. Paul, M. E. Stone (eds.), *ʿAl Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic philology*, Jerusalem 2001, pp. 427-434.

[158] Abū Shuwayrib prints *Ūziyā*, probably intending Greek *ousia*, but this is not supported by any of the manuscripts he has used.

[159] In Arabic, *Hirmis al-Haramisa*. *Al-Haramisa* is a regularly constructed plural. This is a correct translation of "Trismegistos," which in Greek comes from the repetition of the Demotic sign for "megistos," as explained by Jean-Pierre Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Egypte. T.1: Les textes hermétiques de Nag Hammadi et leurs parallèles grecs et latins*, Laval (Québec), 1978, p. 2.

whom the Arabs call **Idrīs** (Peace be upon him). (2) And he is the first from whom the religious law and wisdom were taken. (3) The Sabeans claim to be related to **Seth** and acknowledge his prophecy. (4) They have books of **morals** *(aḥkām)*, some attributed to Seth, and **some to Yaḥyā, son of Zakarīyā** (Peace be upon him). (5) They **do not affirm the resurrection of the bodies** but [only] that of the souls. (6) They have a writing [using] the **ancient Nabatean letters** according to the order of that alphabet *(abjad)*, but they don't use alif, bā', tā', thā'. (7) They have a book which they call the *First Psalm (al-zabūr al-awwal)*, which [contains] **one hundred and twenty surats, long and short**. (8) They pray in the direction of the Holy Temple [*bayt al-muqaddas*, usually identified with Jerusalem], but God knows where it is located on this earth. The most probable would be that it was in Syria *(al-Shām)* or in Southern Egypt *(Ṣaʿīd Miṣr)*.

Commentary

(1) The assimilation with Agathodaimon is taken by al-Shahrazūrī from the twelfth-century al-Shahrastānī, who states in his chapter on Hermes that Agathodaimon was equivalent to Seth while Hermes was Idrīs-Enoch.[160]

(4) The teachings of Yaḥyā may be a direct reference to the so-called *Johannesbuch*, although this treatise is also known under the title *Book of Kings*.[161] Other sayings of Yaḥyā appear in the *Ginza*.[162] The importance of John the Baptist is attested in the diaries of the Dominican friar Riccardo de Montecrocce, who visited Baghdad in 1291.[163] He notes that Muḥammad was laudatory about the (Mandaean) Sabeans in the Qur'ān, which may prove that his informers, at the end of the thirteenth century and at least in this part of the Islamic world, still did assimilate the genuine Mandaeans with the Qurʾānic Sabeans.[164]

(5) This statement would apply rather to the Ḥarranian Sabeans, and it can already be found in Ibn al-Nadīm and (Ps-) al-Maqdīsī.[165] The Mandaeans

[160] On al-Shahrastānī, quoted already by Chwolsohn and by Scott, see W. Scott, *Hermetica*, vol. 4, Oxford 1936, p. 258. The identification of Idrīs and Enoch was already a puzzle for al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 772), remarks Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, Oxford 2009, p. 155, n. 143.

[161] M. Lidzbarski (ed. and tr.), *Das Johannesbuch*, vol. 2, Giessen 1905, pp. 70-123. See J. J. Buckely, "A Re-Investigation of *The Book of John*," in *ARAM* 16 (2004), pp. 13-23, and Id., *The Great Stem of Souls*, pp. 225-226.

[162] *Right Ginza* 7, quoted by Buckley, *The Great Stem of Souls*, p. 20.

[163] Riccold de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient – Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d'Acre*, ed. and tr. R. Kappler, Paris 1997, p. 202 Lat./p. 203 Fr.

[164] Buckley, *The Great Stem of Souls*, p. 249, remarks that the Mongol period seems to have been one of tranquility for the Mandaeans. They also enjoyed a good relationship with Shāh ʿAbbās (Id., *op. cit.*, p. 234), under whose reign the manuscripts of Shahrazūrī's *History of Philosophers* preserved in the British Library were copied.

[165] G. Monnot, "Sabéens et Idolâtres selon ʿAbd al-Jabbār," in Id., Islam et Religions, Paris 1986, pp. 207-237, esp. pp. 228-229. It is remarkable that in ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the extract of al-Sarakhsī is given as transmitted through al-Nawbakhtī.

believe in the ascension of the soul through heavenly stations. The soul of the dead person achieves this journey in the shape of a new spiritual and unaltered body.[166]

(6) The word "Nabatean" can be used to designate Aramaic populations as well as their writing. This is the case in both al-Masʿūdī and the *Nabatean Agriculture*, although the actual populations can often be difficult to identify with precision.[167] It is furthermore often debatable whether some particular turns of syntax or expressions are actually Arabic or Aramaic.[168] The thirteenth-century Dominican friar Riccardo de Montecrocce notes that "the (Mandaean) Sabeans' writing is between Chaldean [i.e. Syriac aramaic] and Arabic."[169]

(7) The number of chapters (*sūrat*-s) given here is different from the one given above in the short recension. It is closer to what we know today of the Ginza.

(8) Gündüz quotes a number of scholars according to whom the Sabeans were praying towards the "qibla" or towards Yemen.[171] If the qibla mentioned by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is Mecca, this would explain the reference made by al-Sharazūrī to it as the "Holy house" *(al-bayt al-muqaddas)*. The alternative direction of prayer, Egypt, might be taken from the "Ḥarranian source" used by Ibn al-Nadīm, and designating the South as the direction of prayer of the Ḥarranian Sabeans. It should be remembered that Hermes played a prominent role as a Ḥarranian prophet and that the pyramids were regarded as the graves of Agathodaimon and Hermes.[171]

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above that Shahrazūrī had direct knowledge of the Mandaeans, probably through his personal encounters in Iraq. The diaries of his contemporary, the Dominican friar De Montecrocce, show their wide presence in

[166] See K. Rudolph, "La religion mandéenne," in H. C. Puech, *Histoire des Religions*, *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade*, 3 vol., Paris, 1970-1972, vol. 2, pp. 498-522, esp. p. 509; p. 514.

[167] See the extensive discussion by J. Hameen-Anttila, *The Last Pagans Of Iraq*, Leiden 2006, p. 20; pp. 25-26; pp. 36-43.

[168] For a linguistic perspective, see J. C. Greenfield, "Some Arabic Loanwords in the Arabic and Nabatean Texts from Naḥal Ḥever," in S. M. Paul, M. E. Stone (eds.), *ʾAl Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic philology*, pp. 497-508.

[169] Riccold de Monte Croce, *loc. cit.*

[170] S. Gündüz, *The Knowledge of Life*, p. 23 (the "qibla": Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; al-Qurṭubī; Ibn Ḥayyān); p. 25 (Yemen: Abū Zanad, d. 747, quoted by Ibn Kathīr).

[171] According to al-Kindī, quoted by al-Idrīsī, see Carra de Vaux (tr.), *al-Maçoudi, Livre de l'Avertissement et de la Révision*, note 1, pp. 29-32 on p. 32. The same element also appears in al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), *Ḥuṣn al-muḥāḍara*, without mention of al-Kindī, see A. Fodor, "The Origins of the Arabic Legends of the Pyramids," in *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 23 (1970), pp. 335-363.

Baghdad by the end of the thirteenth century. The details given by al-Shahrazūrī cannot be found in earlier sources although he may have known al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology of the Ancient Nations (al-Āthār al-Baqīya)*,[172] of whom he gives a detailed biography in his *History of Philosophers*. In the case of al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik, who wrote in far-away Egypt, the possibility that some information on the genuine Mandaeans had reached him would be by way of erudition, either through a Ḥarranian, or a Baghdadian source, in addition to the elements he could read in the books of heresiographers and commentators. To investigate Ibn Fātik's sources on the Sabeans comprehensively, one should address as a priority the chapters following Seth in the *Choicest Maxims*: Hermes, Asclepius, and Ṣāb. As researchers have recently been granted the publication of Kevin van Bladel's doctoral thesis on the Arabic Hermes, which contains an in-depth study of al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's chapter on the three Hermeses, we hope to offer such a study in a forthcoming publication.

[172] The description by al-Birūnī of the Mandaeans (*Chronology*, p. 188 tr. Sachau) has been quoted many times and accepted by Lady Drower and others as fitting them perfectly. S. Gündüz, *The Knowledge of Life*, p. 43, n. 199, quoting Drower, *The Haran Gawaita and the Baptism of Hibil-Ziwa*, Vatican City 1953, p. viii.